

TOWN OF  
**GRAFTON**  
MASSACHUSETTS



2001 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

# 2001 Grafton Comprehensive Plan Acknowledgements

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Robert Mitchell, Vice Chairman  
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Martin Temple, Member  
Ricky J. Lukasevich, Member  
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November 26, 2001

To Grafton Residents,

This document is the 2001 Grafton, Massachusetts Comprehensive Plan. The effective date is December 1, 2001.

The Plan is the product of many meetings and discussions among Grafton residents and the Planning Board. As we have all worked together to develop the Plan, many recommendations have been included that are designed to:

- ☐ Promote the General Welfare in Grafton,
- ☐ Encourage Coordination in the development process,
- ☐ Identify Town Goals and Policies,
- ☐ Communicate Town Goals and Policies, and
- ☐ Guide Future Development

It is the Board's belief that this Comprehensive Plan establishes a working blueprint for the future of Grafton.

Respectfully,

Robert Hassinger, Chairman  
Grafton Planning Board



## COVER PHOTOS

Willard House	Quinsigamond River
Flint Pond	Agricultural Open Space

## GRAFTON REGIONAL SETTING





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# 1

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Profile of the Town of Grafton**

Grafton, a community of 14,894 people,<sup>1</sup> is in Worcester County, Massachusetts. The total area of the Town is 23.27 square miles, 22.74 square miles of which is land and the remainder, water bodies. The Massachusetts Turnpike passes through Grafton, and an interchange less than one-half mile away provides easy access to two of the largest cities in New England: Boston and Worcester. The Town shares borders with Millbury, Northbridge, Shrewsbury, Sutton, Upton, Westborough, and Worcester.

Grafton is currently at a crossroads, and many of the decisions made about the Town now will have lasting and strong effects. The new exit added to the Turnpike in Millbury brings increased traffic to the area; the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority has opened a commuter rail station in Grafton; and CenTech Park and its neighbor Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine are creating opportunities for significant growth in the areas of manufacturing, biotechnology, and research. There is an ongoing attempt to find beneficial uses for some of the Town's older structures and sites. In addition, Greater Boston Metropolitan area westward migration has reached beyond Route 495.

On the other hand, Grafton has many assets. It is a small town with an attractive and historic Town Center, three (3) traditional villages, and tremendous natural resources. The Blackstone River and its numerous tributaries, along with significant open space, make the Town a scenic community of the type commonly associated with traditional New England values.

Another important resource in Grafton is the people. A high degree of community volunteerism and participation in Town government help to make Grafton special.

### **The Comprehensive Plan**

Grafton has undergone dramatic changes in recent years, from a small town to one of the fastest growing towns in Central Massachusetts. The population has increased by nearly one-third since 1980<sup>2</sup>.

Rapid growth can create a host of pressures on a town, from skyrocketing land prices to a sense of transience. Increased prices of land and population transience in turn place a strain on public services. Rapid growth weakens the

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<sup>1</sup> This figure is from the 2000 U.S. Census

<sup>2</sup> Based on 2000 U.S. Census figure of 14,894



sense of stability and community, and poses the new challenges of balancing environmental protection and quality of life with economic development and opportunities for all.

Growth is changing Grafton from a rural town with strong historic villages to a suburban town with some remaining rural areas. In the midst of a transitional period, it is imperative for Grafton residents to plan for how they want their town to look twenty (20) years from now. It is this reason that the Town decided to update its 1963 *Comprehensive Plan*.

### ***Elements Of the Comprehensive Plan***

A 'Comprehensive' or 'Master' Plan provides a basis for decision-making for the long-term physical development of a municipality. It contains both a long-range physical plan and statements of policy. It is defined by the *Massachusetts General Laws, Municipal Planning and Subdivision Legislation, Chapter 41, Section 81D, Master or Study Plan*, and includes Elements that address the following topics:

***Goals and Policies***

***Land Use***

***Housing***

***Economic Development***

***Natural, Historical and Cultural Resources***

***Open Space and Recreation***

***Public Facilities and Services***

***Traffic and Circulation***

***Implementation***

Specifically, the *Comprehensive Plan* is intended to serve a range of functions, including the following:

- *Promoting the General Welfare.* The Plan serves to promote the general health, safety and welfare of the community. It does this by establishing guidelines for development, by facilitating the adequate provision of utilities and public services, and by encouraging appropriate development.
- *Encouraging Coordination.* The coordination of private development along with the community goals and

necessary facilities reduces costs for developers and the Town as a whole. The Comprehensive Plan anticipates future development and needs, and coordinates development and needs with existing and planned public programs, facilities and services.

- *Identifying and Reviewing Town Goals and Policies.* Local governments make policy on a frequent basis. Updating the Plan gives the Town the opportunity to determine whether or not existing goals and policies are still appropriate, develop any new ones that are needed, and write down current practices that should be formalized as policy statements.
- *Communicating Goals and Policies.* The Comprehensive Plan contains goals and policies in a written form, in a readily accessible location. This aids the Town decision-makers in reviewing developments and directing programs. Written policies assist both the public and developers in identifying Town requirements, and make the development process more certain, more efficient, and lower in cost.
- *Guiding Future Development.* The Plan can guide development into areas with municipal services, or to areas where services can be provided economically, and to areas with minimum environmental constraints.

The *Comprehensive Plan* builds upon these fundamental issues and findings. Its policies will give planning direction and demonstrate intent, supporting a vision of Grafton twenty years from now as a healthy and dynamic community framed within a rich natural and historical setting. It is a vision of the future in which Grafton's natural assets – its trees, farm pastures, and water bodies – have been preserved and enhanced. The Town's industrial research and office areas as well as the commercial areas also support a responsible approach to resource management. Grafton's sense of community and quality of life are reinforced by residential neighborhoods that are attractive and safe places in which to live.

As a guide for the physical, economic and social development of the Town for the next twenty years, the Comprehensive Plan establishes goals and policies for use in evaluating the future's decisions. The Plan's policies communicate the long-term values and aspirations of the community. By looking at the community as a whole, the Plan shows how all the different parts – land use, housing, transportation, capital facilities and so forth – must work together to achieve the desired Vision.

The *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes the complexities involved in addressing issues associated with growth such as increased traffic congestion, need for affordable housing, and economic sustainability. It recognizes that tradeoffs must be made to balance costs with gains, that flexibility is necessary to adapt to changing conditions, and that it must reflect at all times the long term goals of people living and working here. The *Comprehensive Plan* is a vehicle to help Grafton achieve its vision of the future.

Once the Comprehensive Plan is adopted, all the Town's decisions should be consistent with it. The Plan minimizes conflict in decision-making and promotes coordination among programs and regulations when it is used as a guide. The Plan is intended to be *comprehensive, long-range, and flexible*.

## **The Planning Process**

To make the final product truly Grafton's Plan, and to ensure community participation in the planning process, the Planning Board invited interested citizens to join a *Comprehensive Plan Committee*.

As a part of the Comprehensive Plan process, the Planning Board, the Comprehensive Plan Committee, and the consultants worked with the community to identify and develop a common Vision of Grafton and to describe the future the Town residents deserve.

Steps used to clarify how the citizens of Grafton visualize the Town were determined by the following process:

- A Community Survey was conducted
- Town Employees and Board and Committee Heads were interviewed
- Citizen 'Visioning Sessions' were held
- Neighborhood meetings were held, and monthly committee meetings were scheduled to follow the Vision Sessions
- Background information was published in the local paper

### **The Community Survey**

A community survey was prepared and printed in *The Grafton News*, posted on the Town web site, made available at the Planning Board Office and at Town Meeting in 1999, and mailed with the year 2000 tax bills. Four hundred and forty-two (442) citizens completed survey forms and returned them to the Planning Board.

Major findings of the *Community Survey* include:

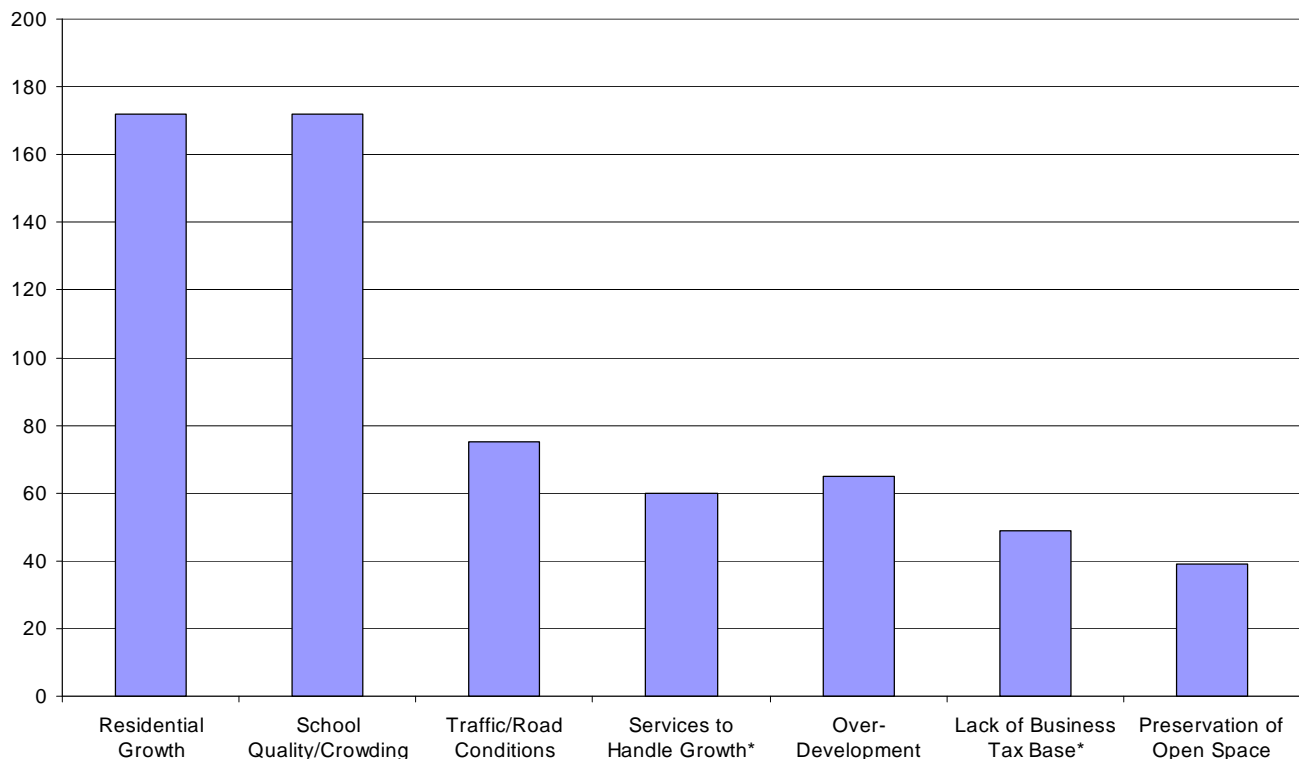
- Grafton's main attractions include its small town/rural atmosphere, location, perceived affordability, and woods and farmlands.
- Respondents see residential growth and school quality and size as primary issues facing the town in the next ten (10) years. Traffic, preservation of open space, and other services intended to handle growth are also frequently mentioned.
- Respondents would like to see CenTech Park and Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine fill with industrial, manufacturing, or research and development companies that are not environmentally hazardous.
- Re-use of existing structures should be maximized, and the greatest efforts should be made to make them adaptable for re-use.
- The types of commercial development that should be encouraged in concentrated areas along Routes 122 and 140 should be those that increase diversity of businesses and improve the appearance of the Town.
- An increase in youth services is needed.
- Traffic congestion along major routes in Town is a problem that survey respondents feel is only going to get worse.
- Open space must be protected from development, tax money should be used for this purpose, and additional costs to the Town are acceptable for this purpose.
- There is support for limiting the number of building permits for new homes issued each year.
- The Town should consider implementation of laws regulating house size in relation to lot size.

There is a significant amount of overlap among issues identified in the survey responses as “serious in the next ten years”, e.g., *residential growth, over-development, and loss of open space*.

The central theme is certainly one of addressing growth in Grafton, including that of questioning the Town's ability to handle growth and the negative effects growth may have on quality of life. A breakdown of the responses ranked as "most serious" appears in **Chart 1-1**.<sup>3</sup>

**"What do you think are the Two Most Serious Issues Facing Grafton in the Next Ten Years?"**

**Chart 1-1**



**Interviews**

Between December 1998 and March 1999, interviews were conducted with many of Grafton's Town officials, as well as the Chairs of various active Boards and Committees. After completing thirty (30) interviews, a list of issues was identified as important to the future of Grafton. The list provided a basis for the preparations for Grafton's Visioning Session. The compiled *Interview Survey* is on file in the office of the Planning Board.

<sup>3</sup> The complete *Survey* is on file in the office of the Planning Board

### *The Visioning Process*

Part of the process of crafting the *Comprehensive Plan* is to describe how Grafton sees itself today and tomorrow. To initiate the process, residents attended a *Visioning Session* in January 1999, during which they described how they view their Town today and tomorrow and discussed what they liked and what they didn't like about Grafton. This dialogue formed the basis for an agreement about what qualities and values are shared among citizens. These shared qualities and values will guide the Town's planning efforts to manage the future course of its growth.

Such a vision is crucial to the development of a Comprehensive Plan, because the plan should affirm a community's values and reflect its vision of a desired future. The way a community sees itself tomorrow helps to determine today's land use patterns, how people get around, what community characteristics are preserved, and what numbers of additional people and types of businesses it will attract.

The two *Vision Sessions* were community meetings, held to provide the citizens of Grafton with an opportunity to create a *Vision Statement* to direct the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. The intent was to get citizens together to identify Grafton's major characteristics and assets and current issues, and to reach a consensus as to what the Town should be like in twenty years.

It was determined in the *Visioning Sessions* that Grafton citizens place a high value on the community's natural environment, and they wish to see it preserved. Open spaces and parks rate high on most citizens' lists of things they want to see maintained or expanded. So does the "traditional New England" feel of the Common and the village neighborhoods. In addition, many residents agree that commercial areas should contain basic shopping opportunities and should reflect the Town's attitude of valuing both environmental and human resources.

The Visioning meetings resulted in a list of fifteen (15) aspects of Grafton that were described as "likes" and fifteen (15) that were described as "dislikes." (**Table 1-1**, following page. In addition, nine (9) issues were identified as relevant to Grafton in the next twenty (20) years. Where appropriate, these likes, dislikes and issues are detailed in the Survey.

**Table 1-1**

***Visioning Session:  
Resident Likes  
Identified***

Small Town Character  
Quiet/Reserved/Serene  
Large Trees on Old Streets  
The Historic Districts, and Pride  
in Community  
The Town Center  
Walkable Community  
Location/Access  
Affordability  
Safeness  
Open Space and Wildlife  
The Rivers and Canals  
Quality of Education  
Municipal Services  
Medical Facilities  
A Joint Effort Toward Quality  
Economic Development

***Visioning Session:  
Resident Dislikes  
Identified***

Rate of Growth  
Traffic Issues  
Road Width  
Trash Along the Roadsides  
Decline of Village Sub-Centers  
Divisions Among  
Neighborhoods  
Loss/Disregard of Rural  
Character  
Abandoned and Rundown  
Buildings  
Lack of Vision/Coordination  
Little Coordination of  
Development  
Perceived "Pro Development"  
Stance  
Attitude  
Lack of Regional Planning  
Commercial Strips  
Lack of Shopping Facilities

## **Identification of Major Issues**

Major concerns identified by the *Visioning Process* are listed here. The issues are addressed in each Element of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

- Rate of Growth, Resulting Costs, and Town Infrastructure Capacity
- Tools for Growth
- Commercial Development
- Traffic Congestion
- Open Space
- The changing character of the Town
- Three Neighborhoods
- Participation in Regional Planning
- Need for a Youth Center and Senior Center
- Special Interests and Agenda and a Lack of a Cohesive Philosophy
- Quality of Life
- Recreational Opportunities
- Affordability

### *Neighborhood and Monthly Meetings*

Residents were invited to attend neighborhood meetings in North Grafton, the Center, and South Grafton during 1999 during which they expressed concerns for their neighborhoods, defined problems facing their neighborhoods, and discussed how they viewed the neighborhood's future. In each meeting, residents expressed pride in their neighborhoods' histories and distinctive characters. In each of the meetings, through-traffic was cited as a concern. It was during this part of the planning process that, unfortunately, a major mill fire occurred in Fisherville.

Monthly meetings were scheduled to discuss the *Visioning Sessions*, various issues coming before the Town, and the Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan*. Attendance at the monthly meetings varied, with some citizens appearing regularly and others coming when possible or when the topic was of particular interest to them.



## ***Vision Statement***

During the discussion portion of the *Visioning Session*, a framework for a "*Vision Statement* " was created. Active group participation brought near-consensus. In the months that followed, public meetings were held to revise the statement. To encourage more comment and feedback, working drafts were posted at the same time on the Town web site. The result is a picture of how participants would like Grafton to look like in the future.

The Grafton *Vision Statement* is based, then, on discussions and interviews with Town departments and organizations, the *Community Survey*, and the *Visioning Workshop*.

### ***Grafton Vision***

*GRAFTON is a small Town with a strong sense of community made up of historical New England villages and new neighborhoods, whose residents are its most vital asset, where pastoral landscapes are valued, where open space preservation is considered integral to our town's character, and where carefully-planned residential as well as non-residential development enhance the community's economic stability.*

### *Mission Statement*

Our **MISSION** is to preserve our community's most impressive characteristics by:

- Embracing the high levels of volunteerism prevalent in government, education, sports and social and civic arenas.
- Protecting and retaining the integrity of our natural and historical resources.
- Providing public services and facilities that offer multiple options for and reach into all aspects of the lives of all of our residents while maintaining fiscal stability.
- Providing the best educational programs possible to support our local economy and offer opportunities to all of our residents.
- Supporting and expanding the cultural resources and enrichment opportunities that help define our "quality of life".
- Managing traffic-flow so that the comfortable atmosphere of the town is retained.
- Managing development to ensure a diversified economy and wise use of resources that ensure long-term sustainability.

### **Goals and Policies**

In order for the *Vision Statement* and *Mission* to be used as a guide for future development, it is important to augment it with the Goals that the citizens of Grafton identified in the visioning. The *Goals* are listed on the following page.

*Goals* propose long-range conditions that the Town seeks to enact through its policies and programs. They provide a sense of direction for preserving desirable characteristics that the Town currently enjoys, and assures continued improvement of the Town's vitality and quality of life.

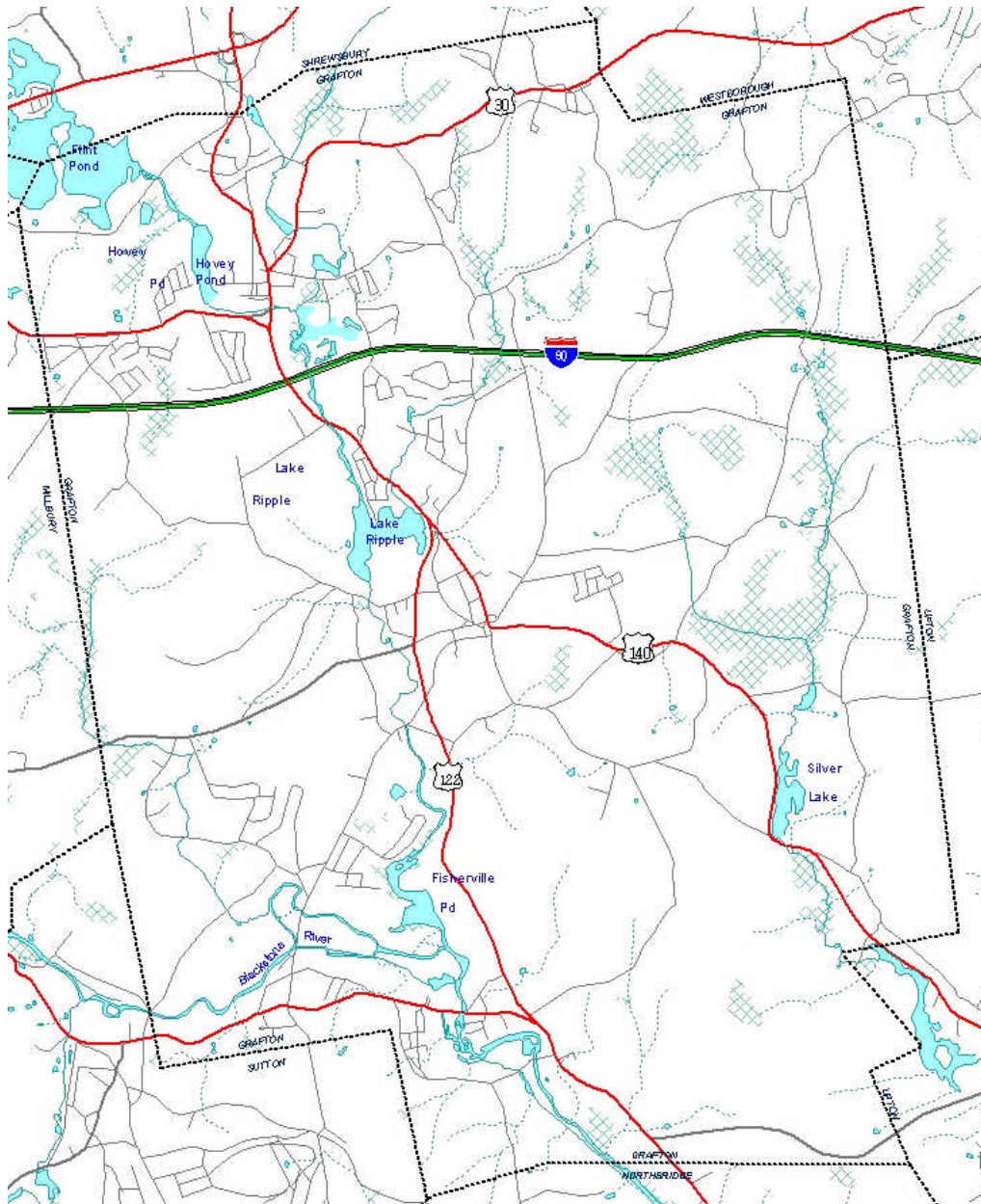
*Policies* provide guidelines and principles that are used to achieve Goals. Policies guide decision makers in arriving at the Goals by helping them allocate resources, and by helping the decision makers focus and coordinate future programs and implementation efforts. Policies are expressed in the *plans, programs, rules and regulations, and operating procedures* by which organizations and departments function.

The following **GOALS** were established to achieve Grafton's *Vision*:

- Preserve Grafton's Town Character
- Increase the already high level of Civic Pride
- Permanently protect open space from development
- Permanently protect Grafton's natural resources and historic neighborhoods and structures
- Preserve the 'New England villages' of North Grafton, Fisherville, Farnumsville, and Town Center
- Limit residential developments to those that are sensitive to the environment and Town infrastructure
- Encourage housing development that preserves open space and natural features
- Increase clean, diverse and geographically focused commercial and industrial activity
- Strengthen the tax base
- Calm the traffic flow in and through Town
- Strengthen existing businesses
- Encourage businesses that depend upon, protect and add to the natural areas of the Town
- Re-use existing structures and commercial areas
- Develop government, citizen and business groups to support the achievement of economic development goals
- Reinforce Villages with mixed use
- Increase automobile-free transportation opportunities
- Create recreational facilities that are accessible for all citizens
- Provide varied and geographically well-balanced recreational facilities and opportunities
- Adjust the rate of growth to a rate that is easily accepted

**GRAFTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BASE MAP**

**Map 1-1**





## LAND USE

# 2

### Introduction

The pattern of Grafton's land use was determined in early settlement years by the Blackstone River and the mill sites established along it. The Town Center developed where Indian Trails, and later the colonial stage coach routes, crossed. Additional centers developed near the mills. In the last half of the 1900s growth in the Town of Grafton brought suburbanization, reinforcement of the existing village centers, and expansion into the remaining rural areas.

Less than 3,000 acres of land were considered to be in urban use in Grafton in 1962.<sup>1</sup> According to research conducted by the *Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission* (CMRPC), an estimated 8,000 acres were in urban use by 1999<sup>2</sup>. The CMRPC study also indicates that, if operating under zoning and development regulations of the present, the population of the Town can double.

Grafton's population has been growing slowly and steadily on a decade-by-decade basis since 1960.

1960 to 1970	0.8%	(US Census)
1970 to 1980	6.5%	(US Census)
1980 to 1990	16.0%	(US Census)
1990 to 2000	14.26%	(US Census) <sup>3</sup>

Forty percent (40%) of the residents responding to the *Community Survey* in 1999 said it was the small-town character of Grafton that attracted them to the Town. The recent substantial increase in the pace of residential development, and the prospect of an even greater increase in the future, has given residents the sense that growth and sprawl are out of control. Seventy percent (70%) said that the Town is growing too fast. Residents made it clear that they fear loss of Grafton's small-town character. Many perceive that rapid growth is also diminishing the Town's sense of community.

The economic upturn in the 1990s resulted in a rapid pace of new development. The pressure for new housing in the Grafton area has increased because new technological changes have made longer commutes possible, and residents can now live farther from their workplaces.

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<sup>1</sup> 1962 *Comprehensive Plan*, Charles E. Downe, Newton, Massachusetts

<sup>2</sup> *Buildout Analysis* by Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, 1999

<sup>3</sup> US census figures released in March, 2000

Pressures from outside the Town's boundaries, reflecting national trends have also had major impact on land use in Grafton. These external pressures include:

- New technology that permits people to work from their homes.
- Interstates #495 and #395, and growth of businesses through the corridors of Routes 128, 495 and 146.
- Limited amounts of buildable land in several neighboring communities.
- A generally outbound development movement from the directions of Boston, Worcester and Providence.
- Increased disposable personal incomes that have encouraged construction of large homes on large lots.
- Demographic changes, especially in increasing numbers of aging Grafton residents.

This section of the *Comprehensive Plan* will address Grafton's land resources, land use pressures, resulting issues facing the Town, impacts of growth, and implementation options available to move Grafton forward toward its Vision and Goals.

## **Goals and Policies**

The land use Goal for the Town is derived from Grafton's *Vision Statement*:

*"Grafton is a small Town with a strong sense of community, made up of historical New England villages and new neighborhoods, whose residents are its most vital asset; where pastoral landscapes are varied; where open space preservation is considered integral to our town's character and where carefully planned residential as well as non-residential development enhance the community's economic stability."*

The *Mission Statement*<sup>4</sup> accompanying the Vision Statement refers to two land-use Policies:

- *".....Managing development to ensure a diversified economy and wise use of resources to ensure long-term sustainability."*
- *".....Protecting and retaining the integrity of our natural and historical resources."*

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<sup>4</sup> The complete text of the *Mission Statement* may be found in the Introductory Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan, page 11.

Other land-use *Policies* that will assist Grafton in achieving its vision for the future include

- *Maximize use of zoning regulations*, to achieve Goals at a minimum of public cost, provide land use regulations that are flexible, and preserve and increase social and economic equity.
- *Support of existing neighborhoods* to enforce the sense of community.
- *Minimize sprawl*, to protect open space and Town character.

## **The Purpose of the *Land Use Plan***

The *Land Use Plan* directs the community toward its goals by guiding the amount, density, pace, and locations of each land use category, e.g., agriculture, residence, business, and industry.

*The Land Use Plan* accomplishes this in four major ways:

- 1) By determining *how much of each type of use is desirable*, and then adjusting land-use regulations to accommodate the desired level of development.
- 2) By determining the *density of future development*, that is, lot size.
- 3) By determining the *character of development*, proposing appropriate regulations for building design control and for the siting of buildings on the lots themselves.
- 4) By determining the *present rate of development*, the *desirable rate of development* and *means of controlling the rate of development* through regulating and/or providing services such as public water and sewer.

1) and 2) determine the *amount* of development that can take place, 3) determines the *character and quality* of that development, and 4) controls the *pace* of development. But a Town Plan can only *guide* growth. The actual land development is the role of landowners and developers.

The *Phases* for achieving Goals and Policies, located at the end of the Element, show sequence and do not represent time periods. Actual dates of implementation are dependent on Town actions and on funding availability.



## **Inventory and Build-Out Analysis**

Existing land use and changes in land use listed by category that may have been made since the Comprehensive Plan of 1962 are shown on **Table 2-1**. The increase in residential land use density “Acres per Capita” reflects smaller family sizes, and also reflects zoning amendments in some parts of Town now requiring larger lots.

### ***LAND USE CHANGES SINCE 1962***

**TABLE 2-1**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Acres in Use 1962<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Acres in Use 1999<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Percent of Change</b>	<b>Acres per Capita 1962</b>	<b>Acres per Capita 1999</b>
Agriculture	3,447	3,698	7.3	0.38	0.256
Residential:					
– Low	681	4,917	622.0	0.076	0.340
– Multi-Family	26			0.003	
Neighborhood Business	76	343	351.3	0.080	0.024
Industrial	375	382	1.9	0.040	0.026
Public and Semi-Public Roads	1,611	2,339	45.2	0.180	0.162
Sand and Gravel	148			0.016	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,364</b>	<b>1,1679</b>	<b>83.5</b>	<b>.708</b>	<b>.808</b>

In 1999, the *Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission* (CMRPC) undertook a land use inventory and an analysis of remaining undeveloped land in Grafton in order to estimate the Town’s potential maximum buildout figure. “*Buildout*” is the number of persons, dwelling units, and amount of non-residential building that can occur if all land is used to capacity under current zoning and environmental regulations. It is a theoretical figure used for planning purposes. It is ‘theoretical’ because there may be irregularly shaped parcels that

<sup>5</sup> 1962 *Comprehensive Plan*, Charles E. Downe, Newton, Massachusetts

<sup>6</sup> *Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission* (CMRPC)

may not be developed, because it cannot be assumed that all landowners will build to the maximum, and because the Town may acquire some of the parcels as open space. Also, land currently developed might be re-developed, or there might be changes in land use regulations. Buildout figures should not be thought of as a projection of Grafton's future, but instead should be considered as a maximum development that would be possible under present regulations.

Zoning depicted on **Map 2-1**, shows the land designated by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) as having development constraints, and **Map 2-2**, shows land designated with partial constraints. "Constraints" include already developed land, wetlands, water bodies, steep slopes, and land with required environmental buffer strips. "Service constraints" include crossing limitations of Massachusetts Turnpike and the railroad at locations that otherwise might be suitable for development, land with present zoning restrictive requirements, and land affected by water and sewer service. (See *Public Facilities Element*). **Map 2-2** also marks subdivisions built or approved since the most recent aerial photography showed how dispersed these subdivisions are. Dispersion accentuates a perception of "sprawl".

CMRPC projected Grafton's build-out in terms of the following categories of land use:

- Agricultural
- Residential (medium density, low density and multi-family)
- Commercial
- Neighborhood Business
- Office And Light Industry
- Industrial
- Public Land, Including Roads

According to CMRPC, an ultimate projected residential build-out would result in the following:

Total Number of Dwelling Units (new and existing)	10,632
Number Of New Residents	13,290
Number Of New Students	2,309

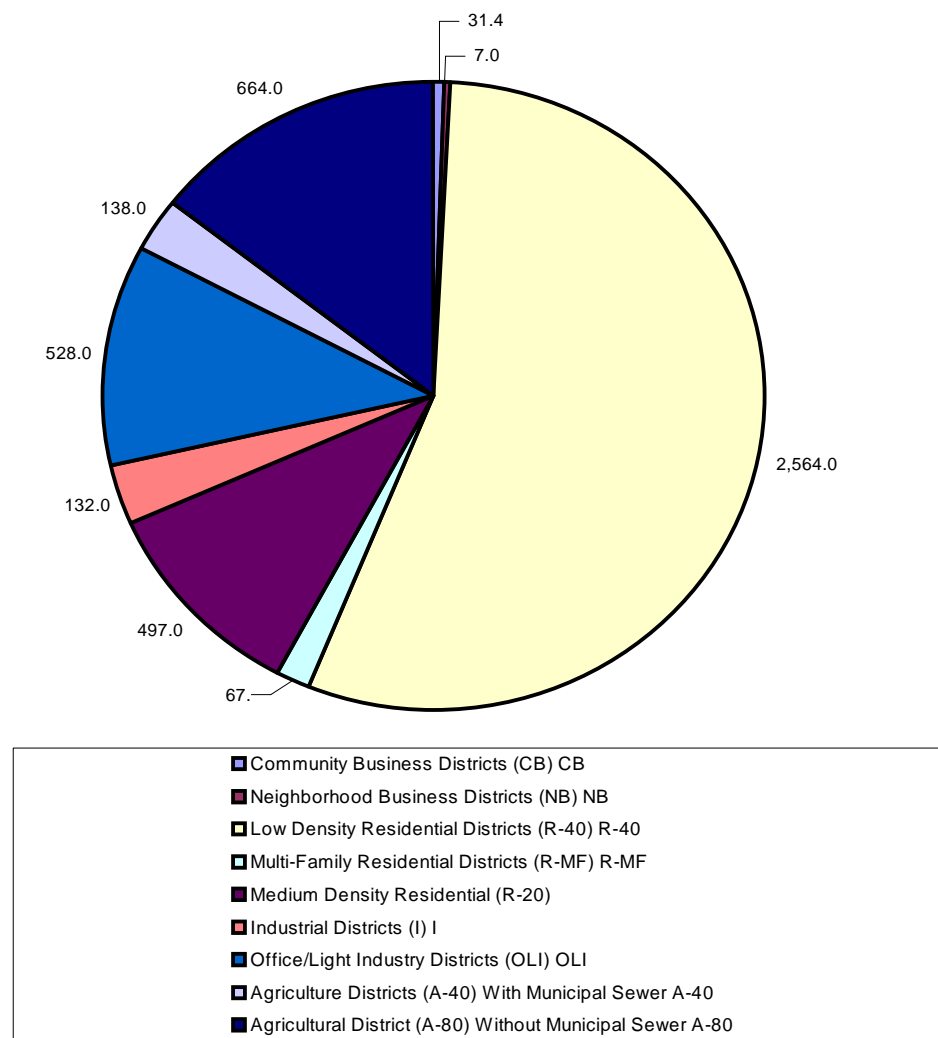
For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that the build-out figures generated by CMRPC are 20% above the maximum potential development of Grafton. The reduction reflects limitations in sewer extensions, in parking limitations within setbacks, in unbuildable land, and in irregularly shaped lots, all of which will reduce the potential number of new dwelling units.

Maximum potential buildout for residential lots number 5,132, and the maximum potential buildout for commercial/industrial area is 5,552,476 square feet of floor space. Once these figures are adjusted to reflect the assumed 20% decrease, residential buildout potential is 4,106, while commercial/industrial floor area potential is 4,441,891 square feet. The industrial land is mostly in CenTech Park, the planned technology park in northern Grafton near the railway station. For further information, see the *Economic Development* Element.

The land that is not constrained for development is shown on **Chart 2-1**, by Zoning District.

**Chart 2-1**

**Total Developable Land by Zone, in Acres**



Zoning: Absolute Development Constraints

**MAP 2-1**

(CMRPC MAP #3)

## **Zoning: Partial Development Constraints**

### **MAP 2-2**

CMRPC MAP #4 (?)

For the purposes of the *Comprehensive Plan*, and in order to move the Town toward its Vision and achieve its Goals, it is assumed Grafton will adopt some measures to reduce potential buildout by a further approximate twenty percent (20%) (See **Table 2-2** on the following page). These measures are addressed in the *Implementation Section* of the *Comprehensive Plan*. The additional twenty-percent (20%) figure has been selected as reasonable in order to limit growth and protect the environment and yet protect property values at the same time.

The greatest numbers of this reduction will occur in the R-40 and A-40 zones, where housing is permitted on approximately one acre of land, and the A-80 zone, which requires almost two acres of land per house. At present these two zones promote the “suburban” feel to which frequent objections were made during interviews. Changes proposed in the *Implementation Section* will reduce the potential buildout in these zones by 30%. The number of housing units in the R-40 and A-40 zones will be lowered from 3,403 to 2,385. The number of units in A-80 zone will be reduced from 411 to 288.

Grafton’s high density residential zone, R-20, increases slightly (2%), from 1,178 to 1,200 housing units. This minor increase is the net result of the effects of defining lot area both by the percent of buildable land, which results in a reduction of the number of housing units, and by encouraging infill, which increases the number of units. The ultimate result will be to strengthen the Town and Village Centers.

The projected buildout in Grafton’s multi-family zone will remain the same.

The resulting overall buildout is to reduce the number of housing units from 5,132 (the number determined under the existing buildout projection) to an estimated 4,013, a decrease of about 22%.

**MEASURES TO REDUCE BUILDOUT**

**TABLE 2-2**

<b>District</b>	<b>Potential Number of New Dwelling Units at Buildout (CMRPC estimate)</b>	<b>Measures to Reduce Yield</b>	<b>Probable Maximum Buildout (Estimate)</b>
A-80  (Without public sewers)	411	Place additional land under Chapter 61 protection* Purchase additional land Adopt mandatory flexible development in unsewered areas Define lot area based on buildable land** Limit expansion of water and sewer service to unsewered areas	288  -30% reduction
R-40 and A-40	3403	Increase setback Increase lot size in selected areas Define lot area by percent of buildable land**	2385  -30% reduction
R-20	1178	Define lot area by percent of buildable land** Increase infill	1200  +2%
Multi-Family	140	Encourage development (not a decrease)	140
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5132 (Estimate)</b>		<b>4013 (Estimate)</b>

\* Chapter 61 provides tax advantages to landowners who do not develop their land, and gives the Town the option to acquire the land when the owner decides to sell or develop.

\*\* No more than twenty percent of the land calculated to meet the minimum lot area shall be classified as having absolute development constraints as shown on the CMRPC maps.

*Note:* Although the percent reduction varies by district, the overall reduction is approximately twenty percent (20%).

To reduce build-out, the following measures are available:

- Adjust the definition of minimum lot size in order to limit amount of unbuildable land counted in the calculation.
- Increase lot size in the eastern portion of Town.
- Require ‘flexible development’ in the eastern portion of Town, or, if this concept is not used, require larger lots. Flexible development, a form of cluster zoning, is a type of residential development permitted by the Grafton Zoning Bylaw. In this form of flexible development, single-family dwellings are clustered into groups separated from each other and from adjacent properties by permanently protected open space.
- Increase required setbacks in the rural areas. This recommendation also protects rural appearance.
- Implement the *Open Space Plan* (e.g. purchase land, and/or place additional land under *Chapter 61* protection).
- Limit the extension of water and sewer service to agricultural land and watershed protection areas. (See *Open Space and Recreation Plan*)
- Reduce building setbacks in Village areas.
- Adopt “phased growth”, based on the growth rate of recent years.
- Adopt neighborhood development guidelines.
- Adopt overlay districts for each neighborhood, which will incorporate guidelines to preserve neighborhood character.
- Acquire land for a municipal service center, to include Town offices and a library.

Other measures to improve land use patterns:

- Improve commercial areas by adopting guidelines for landscaping, signage, curb cuts, and sidewalks.
- Look for opportunities for convenience businesses (coffee, newspapers) and town houses or similar development within walking distance to the station.



## Impact of Growth

Growth and changes of land use affect the character and appearance of the community, they also have a measurable impact on Town resources and use of municipal services. Major public impacts are shown on **Table 2-3**. The impacts shown are based on the CMRPC buildout projection and then a twenty-percent (20%) reduction in the projected buildout figure.

### **GROWTH IMPACTS ON TOWN RESOURCES AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES AT PROBABLE BUILDOUT** **Based on CMRCP figures at the time of the Buildout Study in 1999**

**Table 2-3**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Existing Dwelling Units*</b>	<b>Additional Dwelling Units Projected at Probable Maximum Development</b>	<b>Total Dwelling Units at Buildout CMRPC Estimate, Minus 20%</b>
<b>Residential Units</b>	5,541	4,000	9,541
<b>Commercial/Industrial</b> (square feet of floor area)	5,368,770	5,116,640	10,485,410
Resulting number of residents	14,448	13,290	27,738
Resulting number of students	2,225	1,800	4,025
<b>Water Usage</b> (gal/day) *Residential * Commercial	2,436,040 ---	2,412,389 383,389	4,848,429
<b>Solid Waste</b> (Residences Only) (tons per year) *Municipal solid waste * Non-recycled	9,021 Not available	8,672 5,249	17,693 --
<b>Roads</b> (miles) *In new subdivisions *In Industrial and Office/Light-Industry districts	Not available Not available	81.4 9.4	-- --
<b>Vehicle trips per day</b> from residence <sup>7</sup>	64,830	46,800	111,630

\* Town of Grafton figures, 1999

<sup>7</sup> Grafton Planning Board estimate of 11.7 trips-ends per day per household

It is also useful to consider growth impacts that are based on Grafton's average growth rates over the last ten years, rather than on adjusted maximum buildout figures, in order to determine the amount of growth the Town can absorb. The average annual growth rate of new residential units in Grafton over the last decade is approximately eighty (80) dwelling units per year. Based on the size of lots in recent subdivisions, future units will average 50,000 square feet of land per new dwelling. The following **Table 2-4** presents growth impacts of continued growth at the same rate over the next ten years.

**IMPACT OF RESIDENTIAL GROWTH<sup>8</sup>**  
**Based on Grafton Present Annual Growth Rate**

**TABLE 2-4**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Growth Measures</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Increase After Ten Years</b>
<b>Dwelling units</b>	80/year		800 units
<b>Land use</b>	.7 unit per acre*		1040 acres
<b>Population</b>	2.6 persons per unit		2050 persons
<b>Traffic</b>	11.7 trips per day per single family dwelling		9360 trips per day
<b>Infrastructure</b>	5,600 linear feet of street, water and sewer pipes = 1.06 miles for 80 units	140 feet of frontage (1/2 allocated to each side of the street)	56,000 linear feet = 10.6 miles
<b>Police Officers</b>	.64 per 100 families		6.4 officers
<b>Fire Fighters</b>	.48 per 100 families		4.8 officers
<b>School Classrooms</b>	4 classrooms per 100 families		32 new classrooms
<b>Other Municipal Employees</b>	1 per 250 families		3+ employees
<b>Water</b>	110 gallons per bedroom per day	800 units with three bedrooms	264,000 gallons per day
<b>Recreation</b>	1 acre per 100 families		8 acres

*\*Figure is net, after allowance for roads*

<sup>8</sup> Note: Most impacts can be reduced by twenty to thirty percent by containing sprawl and encouraging other types of residential development. Capital costs of residential sprawl are about thirty percent (30%) higher than if other types of residential development are utilized. The capital costs most affected are streets and utilities.

## **Land Use Options**

Grafton has three basic alternatives regarding land-use policies. They are summarized on **Table 2-5**.

- The first option is to *continue the present rate and present pattern* of development. As a result, the Town will approach a high buildout figure, and there will be more dispersed development, more unconnected open spaces, and minimal reinforcement of the historic village districts.
- The second option is to *limit development but not regulate design*.
- The third option is to *regulate both design and development* by reinforcing centers, protecting rural areas, and regulating the rate of growth and change.

These options were discussed at neighborhood meetings held in North and South Grafton and in Grafton Center. Evaluation of criteria gathered from citizen input and from turning to the Town's *Vision* and *Goals* resulted in this future Land-Use Plan:

- Seek to maintain rural densities in the eastern part of Town, each averaging one dwelling on five acres
- Allow low-density residences on the western part of Town, except for a small rural-density area near Potter Hill and Brigham Hill Roads
- Permit low-density residences from north to south, from south of Route 30 through South Grafton, excluding the commercial strip on Route 140 and Grafton Town Center
- Allow medium-density residences in the Villages and in the railroad station area
- Permit institutional land uses in North Grafton
- Maximum open space throughout Town
- Concentrate commercial development in present business areas
- Develop institutional and high technology areas along Route 30, east of the North Grafton neighborhood

To achieve the Town's land-use goals, the following measures should be adopted:

- Reinforce the strengths of neighborhoods.
- Protect watersheds.
- Preserve open spaces and view sheds.

- Concentrate commercial development.

**SUMMARY OF GRAFTON LAND USE OPTIONS**  
(Options may not be mutually exclusive)

**TABLE 2-5**

AREA	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3
	<b>Continue Present Pattern</b>	<b>Limited Regulation of Land Development</b>	<b>Reinforced centers, protected rural areas, and regulated rate of growth and change</b>
<b>Town wide gateways</b>	No Change		Adopt design guidelines
<b>North Grafton</b>	No Change	ACT <sup>9</sup>	Intensified land use; Employ design guidelines
<b>The Center</b>	No Change	Reinforce historical style of development	Option 2, plus development of a municipal center (see <i>Public Facilities and Services</i> Element)
<b>South Grafton</b>	No Change	Increased density	Intensified land use; Adopt design guidelines; Develop park
<b>Commercial Strip</b>	Contain present development; assure viability; design guidelines	Increase depth of strip where appropriate; design guidelines	Contain commercial development on Route 140; Adopt design guidelines
<b>Industrial Area</b>	Encourage development of presently zoned area; reinforce existing areas	Reduce zoned area	Integrate zoned area with institutions
<b>Station Area</b>	No zoning change	Permit convenience businesses	Permit convenience businesses, town houses, garden apartments
<b>Eastern Grafton</b>	No change	Reduce allowable density	Protect more open land <sup>10</sup>
<b>Municipal Resource Center</b>	No change	Divide resources on a present site and a new site	Create a new municipal center
<b>Agriculture and Natural Resource Areas</b>	No change	Encourage preservation	Aggressive land acquisition and/or incentives to preserve agriculture

<sup>9</sup> ACT stands for "Antiques, Arts, Crafts, Tourists"

<sup>10</sup> See 1999 draft *Open Space and Recreation Plan*



**Table 2-6** below, *Land Use Criteria*, is a list of standardized data that can be used in evaluating land-use proposals.

**LAND USE CRITERIA<sup>11</sup>**

**TABLE 2-6**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Business/ Commercial</b>	<b>R&amp;D/ Industry</b>	<b>Trucking/ Warehouse</b>	<b>Residential</b>	
				<b>Single Family</b>	<b>Townhouses and Apartments</b>
Site should be located within a 2 mile radius of user	+	+	⊕	◇	◇
Turnpike access Level Site Suitable Soils for development	⊕	◇	⊕	◇	◇
Size	4-8 acres per 4000 population	2+ acres	2 acres per 1000 population	Varies	Varies
Development constraints (CMPPC)	⊕	+	+	◇	◇
Municipal services (Public water and Public sewer)	+	+	◇	+	⊕

**KEY:** ⊕ very important; + important; ◇ desirable

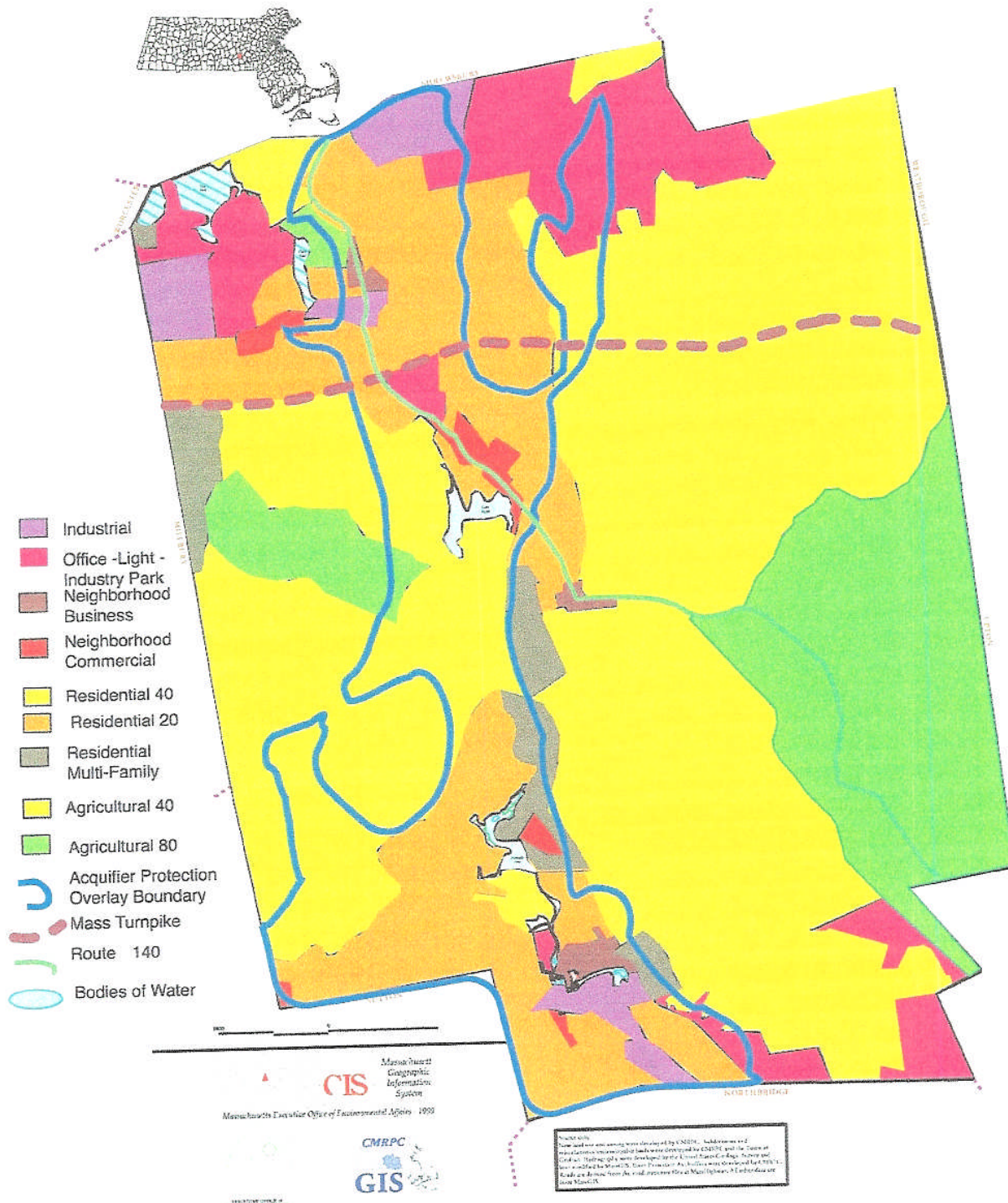
See **Map 2-1** for *Zoning and Absolute Development Constraints*. These constraints include wetlands and slope, ability to cross the Turnpike and railroad at locations suitable for development, and present zoning.

See **MAP 2-3**, for a *Zoning* map and **Map 2-4**, for the *General Land Use Patterns* map.

<sup>11</sup> Planning Standards compiled by Thomas Planning Services

**ZONING MAP**

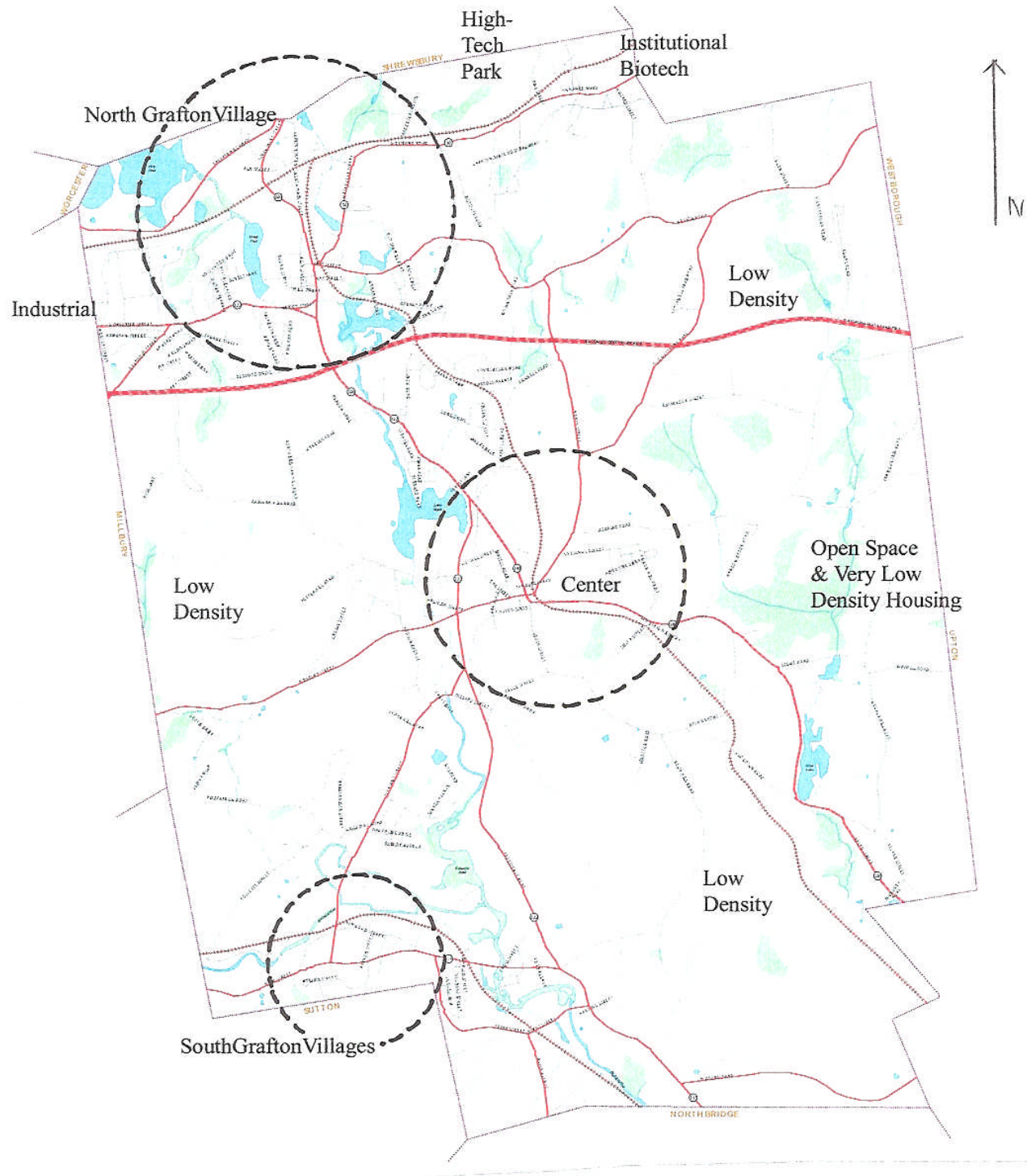
**Map 2-3**





**GENERAL LAND USE PATTERN MAP**

**Map 2-4**



## Sub-Areas for Analyses

### Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are the fundamental building blocks of a Town and therefore of *The Comprehensive Plan*. The characteristics of Grafton's older neighborhoods are summarized on **Table 2-7, Neighborhood Analysis**. A “neighborhood” is generally defined to be an area where residents recognize a common identity, have some informal contact with each other and have some institutions that they recognize as their own.<sup>12</sup> In Grafton, the neighborhood institution most frequently recognized is the *library*.

### NEIGHBORHOOD ANALYSIS

**TABLE 2-7**

<i>Location of Neighborhood</i>	<i>Major Characteristics of Neighborhood</i>	<i>Assets of Neighborhood</i>	<i>Concerns Expressed at Neighborhood Meetings</i>
<b>The Center</b>	Historic homes Small lots around the Common, Large houses/lots on South Street Open space area	The Common, Street/shade trees, Sidewalks, School Library Churches	Traffic, Maintaining historic character
<b>North Grafton</b>	Historic homes Mills Small lots Farm/open space areas	Sidewalks, Antique Stores Convenience Stores School Library	Traffic (especially truck traffic) Recreation Encouraging walking
<b>South Grafton</b>	Mills River	Church River	Sidewalks Mill Site Park

Future development of historic neighborhoods should acknowledge design elements that *differentiate* them. These elements are shown on **Table 2-8** that follows.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix B for selected textbook definitions of the term ‘neighborhood’

**ELEMENTS of NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN**

**TABLE 2-8**

<b>Neighborhood Streets</b>	<b>Focal Point of Neighborhood</b>
Curvilinear	Edges, image
Grid	Water body
Dead-end	Gazebo
On-street parking	Public building
Curbs and sidewalks	Mill buildings
Bikeways	Church
Street/shade trees	Other, e.g. <i>clock</i>
Curb cuts	
Street Furniture: <i>lights, benches, bike racks</i>	
<b>Land Use in Neighborhood</b>	<b>Lot Size and Setback in Neighborhood</b>
Residential	Small
Non-residential	Close to the street
Neighborhood commercial	Front porches
Other commercial	Side yards
Industry	
Cluster or strip development	
Institutional	
Home business	
<b>Most Common Parking Types</b>	<b>Predominating Architectural Styles</b>
Front, rear or side	Colonial, colonial revival, etc
Shared	Front porches
On-street	Height
Landscaping	
<b>Other</b>	<b>Other</b>
School	Fences and Hedges
Recreational facilities	Signs
Businesses	Services

## **Municipal Center**

A Grafton Municipal Center is recommended for Grafton. This area would include a public safety building, Town offices, and the main library. A Municipal Center is discussed in the *Public Facilities and Services* Element.

Criteria for selecting a site for a municipal center include:

- Central location
- In or near an existing Town Center or small business area
- Good site access
- Level or nearly level site
- Sidewalks in the vicinity of the site
- Good drainage
- Adequate land for parking and for future expansion
- Reasonable site development costs
- Visibility
- Compatible adjacent land uses (such as businesses or residences)

A recommended site for the Municipal Center is just South of Grafton Center (see **Map 2-5, Proposed Land Use Plan**). The site meets the criteria, and can be designed around the wetlands there.

Another possible site is on the north side of Merriam Road, between North Street and the intersection of Meadowbrook and Merriam Roads.

## **Business and Industrial Areas**

For a discussion of commercial and industrial areas, see the *Economic Development* Element.

## Land Use Recommendations

To implement the *Land Use Plan* and meet Town goals and objectives, the following recommendations are made:

### LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

**TABLE 2-9**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Goals Fulfilled</b>		
	<i>Preserve town character and limit sprawl</i>	<i>Manage development/ limit growth impacts</i>	<i>Provide municipal service to development</i>
Adopt design guidelines	●		
Regulate rate of growth	●		
Reduce potential buildout		●	
Increase lot size in eastern part of town by limiting sewer extension		●	
Seek opportunities for convenience business near the Station			●
Establish a Municipal Center	●		●
Preserve open space and view sheds	●	●	
Concentrate commercial development		●	●
Protect Watersheds	●	●	
Limit sewer extensions in Agriculture district	●	●	
Encourage high-tech development in designated areas along Route 30		●	●



Implementation of the land use recommendations is summarized in **Table 2-10**. Implementation measures are discussed in detail in the *Implementation* Section.

## **LAND USE TIMELINE**

**Table 2-10**

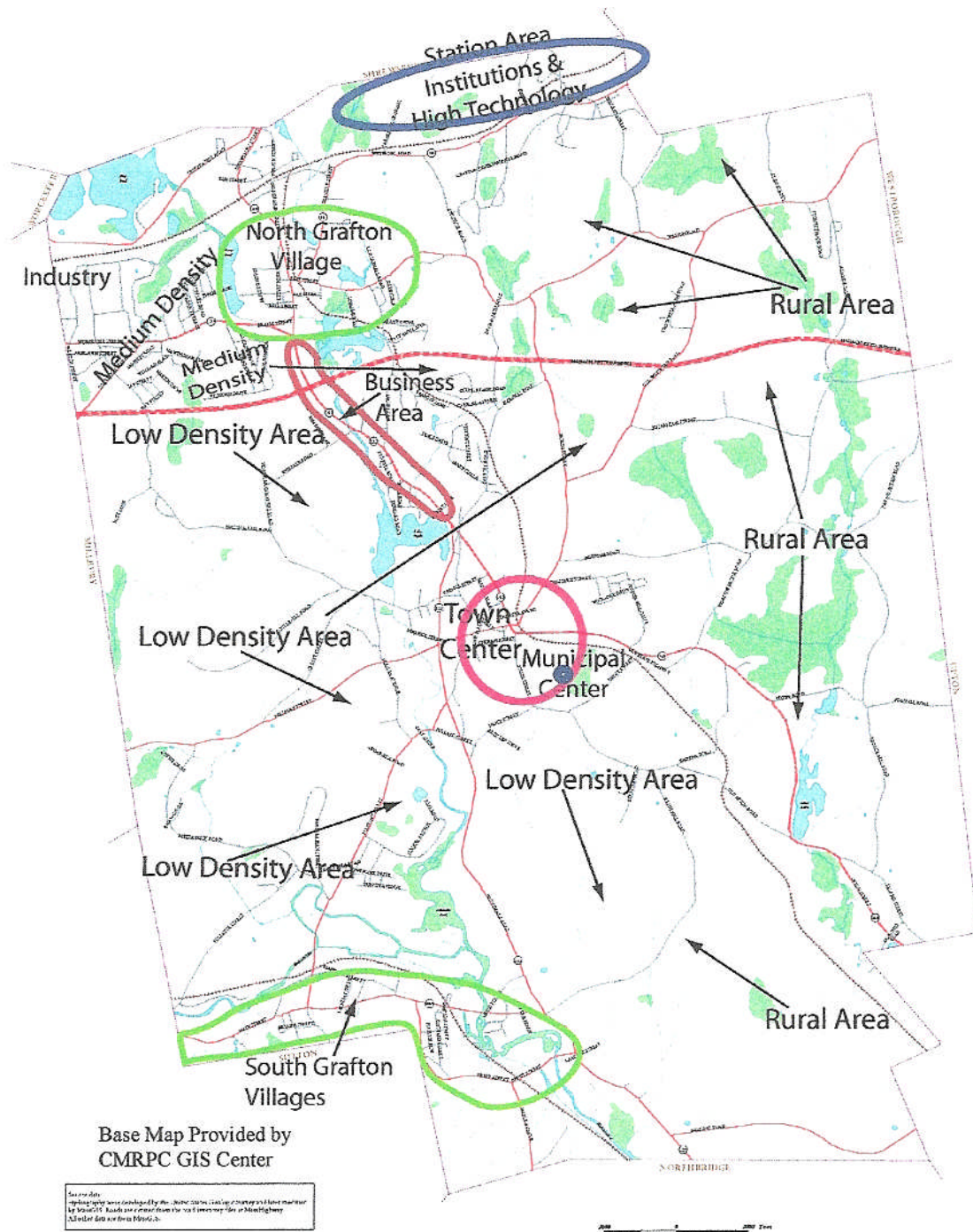
<b><i>Timeline</i></b>	<b><i>Tasks</i></b>	<b><i>Responsible Agency</i></b>
<b>Phase I</b>	Zoning amendments relative to buildable land, setbacks, home occupations, accessory apartments, mandatory cluster, station district, commercial district design	Planning Board Town Meeting
<b>Phase II</b>	Consider Transfer of department rights of sensitive lands to Villages	Planning Board
	Consider phased growth regulation	Planning Board
	Implement the Open Space Plan	Conservation Committee Town Meeting
	Acquire land for a Municipal Center	Board of Selectmen Town Meeting
	Increase lot size in eastern Grafton	Planning Board Town Meeting
<b>Phase III</b>	Adjust commercial district boundaries to reduce commercial strip size	Planning Board Town Meeting
	Adopt neighborhood development design guidelines	Planning Board Town Meeting

For related recommendations, see also **Map 2-5, *Proposed Land Use Plan***, and the *Economic, Housing, Open Space and Recreation and Implementation Elements*.



**PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN**

**Map 2-5**







## HOUSING

# 3

### Introduction

Older architecturally significant homes contribute to the perception of Grafton as a small Town with historic charm and value. The 1999 Community Survey asked “*What characteristics of Grafton should be maintained?*” Small Town/ rural character appeared on more than one third of the responses. Almost 12% of the responses included historic value and charm as characteristics to be maintained.

In subsequent questions nearly three quarters of those who responded indicated that residential growth in Grafton is occurring too rapidly, and almost 40% listed the residential growth rate as one of the two most serious issues facing the Town in the next ten years. When asked whether or not they would support a limit on the number of building permits issued per year, an overwhelming number of those responding (80%) indicated that they would.

Only 35% responded to the housing need question<sup>1</sup>. Housing quality, regional responsibility, cost, or need were not identified as serious issues facing the Town. On the long form of the Community Survey, citizens were asked about which eight different types of housing they would support for Grafton<sup>2</sup>. The only two types that received more yes answers than no were “*assisted living and/or life care facilities*” (47.1% yes, 21.3% no) and “*accessory or in-law apartments*” (39.7% yes, 23.5% no).

#### *To summarize...*

*the survey shows that Grafton’s citizens support control of housing growth that in turn controls municipal costs, they want to maintain small Town atmosphere, and they do not support major changes in housing styles.*

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<sup>1</sup> A long form was distributed first, and then an abbreviated form followed to increase the number of responses.

<sup>2</sup> The housing types appearing in the survey were: ‘Single Family rental’, ‘Single-family owned’, ‘Multi-family rental’, ‘Multi-family owned’, ‘Accessory/In-law apartments’, ‘Two-family duplexes’, ‘Cluster developments’, and ‘Assisted-living and/or Life-care facilities.’

## Goals and Policies

The Town's *Vision Statement* refers to the Villages, to new neighborhoods, and to carefully planned residential areas.

*"Grafton is a small Town with a strong sense of community made up of historical New England villages and new neighborhoods whose residents are its most vital asset; where pastoral landscapes are valued; where open space preservation is considered integral to our Town's character; and where carefully managed residential as well as non-residential development enhance the community's economic stability."*

The following housing goals and policies have been articulated to achieve the *Vision*.

### Goals

- Encourage housing development patterns that preserve open space and natural features.
- Reinforce Villages with mixed uses and a variety of housing types.
- Attain a rate of growth that will neither stifle economic growth nor damage the sense of community.
- Provide housing options that will allow residents to remain in Town as they age and allow the children of residents to establish families in Grafton.

### Policies

- Encourage development in Grafton Villages.
- Encourage planned development to preserve open space and rural vistas.
- Achieve housing needs through incentives to the private sector.
- Encourage in-home work to reduce commuting trips and to support local business.
- Encourage age-restricted housing (over 55).
- Encourage assisted living.
- Encourage accessory apartments.
- Phase growth by limiting new permits issued each year.

The phases for achieving Goals and Policies, located at the end of the Element, show sequence but do not represent time periods. Actual dates of implementation are dependent on Town actions and on funding availability.

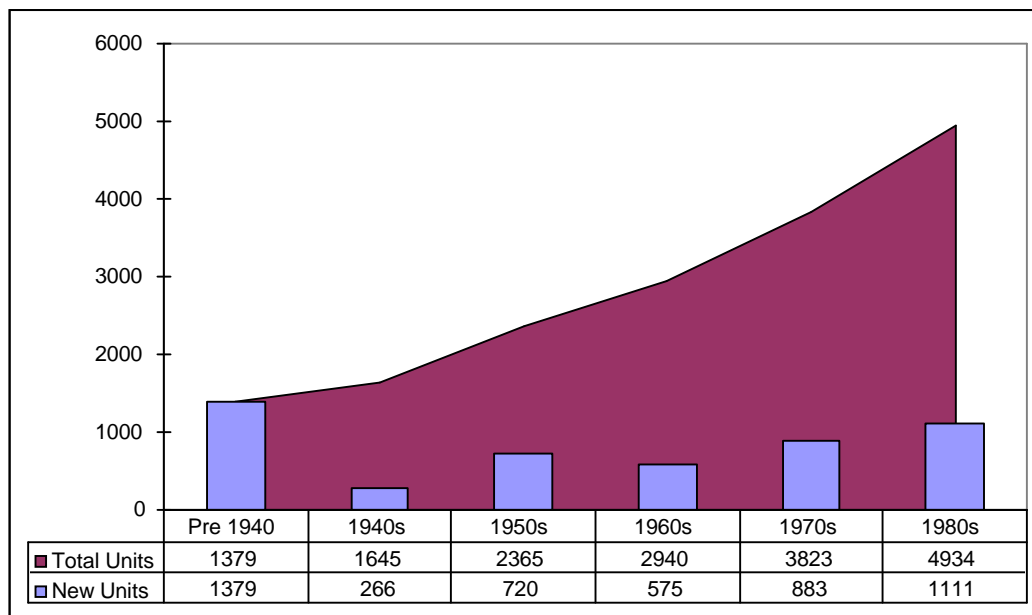
## Housing and Population Trends

During the last two decades, the number of households has increased faster than the population, reflecting the decreasing size of households.

**Table 3-1: Persons per Occupied Household**

Year	Population	Number of Households	Persons per Occupied Household
1980	11,238	4,010	2.89
1990	13,035	5,025	2.72
2000	14,448 (actual)	5,694	2.57

**Chart 3-1: Housing Growth Over Time**



In the 1990s the number of units added was 1060, 51 units less than in the previous decade.

The housing vacancy rate is extremely low. Demand is met, for the most part, by new construction. Housing value has outstripped the rate of construction. The 1990 median sales value of \$134,500 has increased in 2000 to approximately \$220,000 for a single-family house. The median sales value for a condominium was \$145,000 in 2000.

### **Market and Effect on Housing**

The high price of housing in Massachusetts has been identified in the local press and at a recent Citizen's Housing and Planning Association meeting<sup>3</sup> as constraining economic development in the area. It is difficult to isolate the cost factor of housing or assess its potential impact on housing in Grafton because:

- Grafton is in the line of westward development where developers and purchasers alike are seeking housing less expensive than that in the Route 128 and Route 495 fringe.
- Construction and land costs are high throughout the State.
- Grafton zoning and septic systems require large lots.
- Companies in the area are expanding. In Hopkinton, EMC Company alone is planning for an additional four million square feet of space.
- Impacts of the new MBTA Station were not felt until 2000.
- CenTech Park, when occupied, will affect housing demand because of increasing numbers of employees.
- Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine plans 1,700 new jobs over the next twenty (20) years and expects a large portion of the homes for new employees will be provided by new development.<sup>4</sup>

It can be determined from the rate of growth (10.5% in the last decade) and from the number of subdivision plans before the Planning Board, representing approximately three hundred (300) units, that the high price of housing is not adversely affecting housing demand in Grafton at this time.

### **Housing Types and Conditions**

Housing quality is good. Two thirds of the housing in Town has been built since World War II and sixty percent (60%) has been built since 1970. New housing is generally large, single-family, well built homes with three or four bedrooms. Older homes are well maintained. There are no concentrated areas of dilapidated or deteriorating housing in Grafton. The converse is the case. During the recent

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Harrington of Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies speaking at the Fleet Bank on June 23, 1999

<sup>4</sup> Tufts University Grafton Campus Comprehensive Plan Summary, 1998

prosperous years there have been residential repainting, improvements, and additions.

Housing is mostly owner-occupied, single family or single family with some other combination (i.e. two-family owner-occupied and rental units). New town houses or garden apartments are on scattered sites.

## **Housing Needs**

Based on the *Visioning* session, on public meetings, the survey, and interviews with Town Boards and employees, it is clear that Grafton residents are more concerned with the rate of growth than they are with the need for housing opportunities for existing residents. Nevertheless, the following areas of concern have been identified: For extended definitions of types of housing, see Appendix C.

### *Affordable Housing*

The housing that is currently being constructed is all at market prices. Market-price housing is beyond the reach of most current Grafton residents if the assumed guideline is used of allocating no more than thirty percent (30%) of personal income towards housing (or two and a half times income for housing purchase). The Housing Authority has noted that the cost of housing is especially a burden for persons whose incomes have increased enough to necessitate a move from subsidized housing, or for young people who have grown up in Grafton and would like to remain in Town.

*Chapter 40B* of the *Massachusetts General Laws*, effective November 1, 1969, was enacted to encourage development of affordable housing in all communities in the Commonwealth. *Affordable housing*, as established by the Commonwealth, is for those persons whose income level is below eighty percent (80%) of the regional median household income, for a family consisting of up to four (4) people. The Act states that ten percent (10%) threshold of the housing stock should be “affordable” for low or moderate-income households. If this threshold is not met, a developer may seek waivers from local laws and regulations in order to create such housing.

Based on the estimate of housing units in Grafton, the threshold would be 554 affordable housing units (10% of 5,541 housing units). Because only about 300 units currently qualify as ‘affordable’, an additional number of about 250 are required to meet the threshold. The percent of total units qualifying has dropped to 3.1% in 1999 from 4.3% in 1990, reflecting new housing development at market rates and the lack of new affordable units.

The intent of *Chapter 40B* has been reinforced by *Executive Order 418* (signed by the Governor 21 January of 2000), encouraging towns to plan for new housing opportunities.<sup>5</sup>

A range of housing styles is available in Town, but currently the only affordable housing available is that provided by the Grafton Housing Authority. There are approximately 300 units owned and managed by the Grafton Housing Authority for families, elderly, veterans and disabled. The waiting list for such a unit is one to two years.

#### Alternative Styles of Housing

As Grafton citizens get older and less mobile or as their incomes are reduced, they will find it increasingly difficult to remain in Town unless steps are taken to reduce their housing burdens. Transportation is limited, and there are few concentrated service areas to which they can walk. Further, there are no “assisted living” or “congregate” housing options for Seniors in Grafton, and no Senior tax incentives or programs that might provide credit toward property taxes for those who are in need, or for those who might volunteer their services in exchange for tax rebates. Even though they might wish to stay in Grafton, Seniors may have to choose smaller and more centralized housing in other communities, where they can enjoy companionship and independence and still have the levels of service they need.

Alternative housing styles to be explored by the Town include:

- Age-restricted housing. Housing with some maintenance services, limited generally to persons fifty-five or older
- Assisted Living. Housing that provides some meals and assistance with daily activities while providing independent residential units
- Adult foster care. Affordable independent living with some cleaning, food service, and monitoring of medication

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<sup>5</sup> The *Order* also states that towns plans shall also include target commercial and industrial economic development (if any), improve transportation opportunities and preserve housing. To improve housing opportunities, the Executive Order states that plans shall include “among other things, plans for:

- Where community will create new housing opportunities
- Where it will target commercial or industrial economic development (if any);
- How it will improve its transportation infrastructure (or how its existing infrastructure will handle any growth); and
- Where and how it will preserve open space

## Zoning Regulations

Present zoning permits single-family houses in each of the four (4) Residential Districts, on the following minimum lot sizes.

### Minimum Lot Sizes for Single-Family Homes

Table 3-2

<b>A</b>	<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>80,000 square feet (40,000 if with public sewer)</b>
<b>R40</b>	<b>Low Density Residential</b>	<b>40,000 square feet</b>
<b>R20</b>	<b>Medium Density Residential</b>	<b>20,000 square feet</b>
<b>RMF</b>	<b>Multi-Family Residential</b>	<b>44,000 square feet</b>

Single-Family residences are also allowed by special permit in the Flood Plain Overlay District.

- Accessory Apartments (separate housekeeping units, substantially contained within the structure of a single-family dwelling) are allowed by special permit in Residential Districts.
- Multi-family residences are allowed by special permit in the RMF District.

The front yard setback is thirty feet (30) in single-family districts and thirty-five (35) feet in the multi-family residential district. Adjustment of this setback in the Villages and outlying areas and the relating of multi-family lot size to numbers of units are issues addressed in the *Land Use* Element.



## Housing Strategies

There are many housing strategies that Grafton can consider for use in meeting its housing needs. The following primary strategies are listed in **Table 3-3**, and are evaluated for goal satisfaction.

### SELECTED HOUSING STRATEGIES

**TABLE 3-3**

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Potential Advantages</i>	<i>Potential Disadvantages</i>	<i>Potential for Grafton</i>
Establish revolving fund for rent and/or mortgage	Can target loans to address needs. Proceeds from loans can be cycled back into program	Limited fund available to Town from State and Federal resources or private funding. Takes municipal staff time	Limited
Tax relief for seniors	Reduces ownership costs Helps to keep seniors in town	Loss of tax revenues	Limited
Housing grants	Can target grant to address needs	Requires municipal staffing or consultant assistance Limited Town, State, and Federal resources available	Limited
Prepare clearinghouse for affordable properties	Encourages reuse of homes	Takes some municipal staff time	Limited
Publicize housing education programs	Promotes good homeowner-ship/neighbors	Requires municipal staff time, bank support and/or volunteers	Moderate
Provide technical home assistance	Promotes good homeowner-ship/neighbors	Takes municipal staff time and volunteers	Moderate
Require some affordable housing in larger subdivisions, or money in lieu thereof	Provides additional affordable housing	May slow or reduce residential development	Moderate

**SELECTED HOUSING STRATEGIES FOR REVIEW** continued

**Table 3-3** continued

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Potential Advantages</i>	<i>Potential Disadvantages</i>	<i>Potential for Grafton</i>
Encourage assisted-living, continuing-care, congregate housing, adult foster care and age-restricted (over 55) housing	Creates tax benefit to the Town because of limited municipal expenditure	May not be suitable for all areas, as in sensitive watershed or non-residential areas	Good
Establish a position to handle housing functions in the Office of the Planning Board	Position can be responsible for various housing /community development strategies ( <i>see above</i> )	Municipal staffing and expenditure required	Good
Code enforcement	Maintains and/or improves housing stock	Requires staff time (Board of Health, Inspection)	Moderate
Continue <i>Title 5</i> assistance	See <i>Public Facilities and Services</i> Element	Requires staff time and municipal expenditure	Moderate
Non-profit housing trust	No public expenditure	None	Moderate
Comply with EO 418	Meets State objectives	None	Moderate
Encourage home-based businesses	Affordability	None	Good
Accessory housing	Diversity	None	Good
Encourage a variety of housing types in villages	Reduces sprawl Encourages sense of community	See <i>Land Use</i> Element	Good
Phase growth	Limits annual growth to rate Town can absorb	Difficult to administer	Good

**Recommendations**

Many of Grafton's housing needs can be met by the following *Actions*, not listed in any order of priority. They are evaluated for *Goal Satisfaction* on **Table 3-4**.

- Re-use vacant mill space for housing, to include a combination of affordable housing, elderly assisted living units, and adult foster care units. To accomplish this, it is recommended that the Housing Authority work with mill owners to develop public/private partnerships. Since the Fisherville mill fire, there is less available space, but maximum use should be made of what remains.
- Remove the requirement for special permits for accessory apartments, and instead insert accessory guidelines into the Zoning Bylaw. An accessory apartment frequently provides some assistance as well as company for elderly persons endeavoring to maintain their homes, and helps use excess capacity in the dwelling.
- Reduce the *allowable* rate of growth per year (phase growth) to the *average* rate of the last decade.
- Reduce the amount of land available for development by implementing the *Open Space Plan* and *Land Use Plan*.
- Offer assistance to first-time homebuyers to reduce their down payment costs. Encourage non-profit classes to educate potential homeowners on necessary basic home-owning skills such as maintenance, mortgage, insurance, homeownership tips and the importance of land use recommendations.
- Permit two-or-more-family homes in single-family areas, if the appearance is that of a single-family house.
- Increase affordable housing by requiring that all subdivision plans of ten (10) lots or more provide at least ten percent (10%) of their proposed units as "affordable" (as defined by the Commonwealth). Affordable housing would remain affordable through the use of resale deed restrictions, which requires the units to remain affordable for at least twenty (20) years. For the purposes of calculating the ten percent (10%) affordable housing contribution, all numbers would be rounded to the nearest whole figure. Affordable housing units within market rate developments would be integrated with the rest of the development and would be comparable in design, appearance, construction, and quality of materials with other units constructed.
- In lieu of developing affordable units, an applicant could provide cash contribution of equivalent value to the Grafton Housing Authority or to any non-profit affordable housing provider who at a future date might be

designated by the Town. The method of payment should be agreed upon between applicant and Housing Authority, and should be secured as a condition of development approval. Residential developments entirely comprised of housing units that are affordable, for households at or below the median price, could help Grafton meet the State's ten-percent (10%) affordable housing standard.

- Continue to encourage flexible development (see *Land Use* Element).
- Amend present zoning provisions to allow housing options such as assisted living, continuing care facilities, age-discriminatory housing, and congregate housing. These housing options, if developed, may pay more in taxes than the existing mix of housing in Town.
- Consider other housing types, such as town houses, which are multi-family homes with single-family appearances, in connection with the design of the villages (see *Land Use* Element).

**COMPATABILITY OF HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS  
WITH HOUSING GOALS**

**Table 3-4**

Recommendations	Goals			
	<i>Encourage housing development that preserves open space and natural features</i>	<i>Reinforce Villages</i>	<i>Adjust the rate of growth</i>	<i>Provide a variety of housing styles to accommodate all</i>
Re-use vacant mill space for housing, to include a combination of affordable housing, elderly assisted living units, and adult foster care units	●	●		●
Work with mill owners to develop public/private partnerships	●	●		●
Remove the requirement for special permits for accessory apartments, and instead insert accessory guidelines into the Zoning Bylaw				●
Reduce the amount of land available for development by implementing the Open Space Plan and Land Use Plan	●	●	●	
Offer assistance to first-time homebuyers to reduce down payment costs				●
Encourage non-profit classes to educate potential homeowners				●
Increase affordable housing by requiring that all subdivision plans of ten (10) lots or more provide at least ten percent (10%) of their proposed units as affordable				●
In lieu of developing affordable units, an applicant may provide cash contribution of equivalent value to the Grafton Housing Authority or to a non-profit affordable housing provider				●
Continue to encourage 'flexible' development	●			●

**Compatibility Of Housing Recommendations With Housing Goals *continued***

**Table 3-4, continued**

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Goals</b>			
	<i>Encourage housing development that preserves open space and natural features</i>	<i>Reinforce Villages</i>	<i>Adjust the rate of growth</i>	<i>Provide a variety of housing styles to accommodate all</i>
Amend present zoning provisions to allow housing options such as assisted living, continuing care facilities, age-discriminatory housing, and congregate housing		●		●
Consider other housing types, such as Town Houses, in connection with the design of the Villages	●	●		●
Control rate of growth by limiting yearly number of building permits issued	●		●	
Increase affordable housing by a set-aside*				●
Lobby for legislation to broaden definition of affordable housing (to include unsubsidized units)*	●			●
Amend zoning to reflect additional housing options, such as age-restricted, assisted-living, and adult foster care				●
Establish a revolving fund for housing	●			●
Permit townhouses in Villages	●	●		●
Permit multi-family housing with single-family appearance		●		

\* Meets the State Goal of 10% of housing as affordable

The implementation of *Housing* recommendations is summarized in **Table 3-5**. These measures are also discussed in the *Implementation* Section.

The phases for achieving Goals and Policies, located at the end of the Element, show sequence but do not represent time periods. Actual dates of implementation are dependent on Town actions and on funding availability.

## HOUSING TIMELINE

**Table 3-5**

<i><b>Timeline</b></i>	<i><b>Tasks</b></i>	<i><b>Responsible Agency</b></i>
<b>Phase I</b>	Reduce amount of raw land available for development by making changes in zoning and subdivision regulations; amend zoning to reflect additional housing options, such as age-restricted, assisted-living, and adult foster care	Planning Board Town Meeting
	Continue to encourage flexible development	Planning Board
<b>Phase II</b>	Lobby for legislation to broaden definition of affordable housing (to include unsubsidized units)*	Planning Board Housing Authority
	Permit townhouses in Villages; permit multi-family housing with single-family appearance	Planning Board Town Meeting
	Control rate of growth by limiting yearly number of building permits issued	Planning Board Town Meeting
	Increase affordable housing by a set-aside (on the 2000 Town Meeting warrant)*	Planning Board Town Meeting
<b>Phase III</b>	Consider transfer of development rights of sensitive lands to Villages	Planning Board
	Establish a revolving fund for housing	Planning Board Town Meeting

\*Meets the State Goal of 10% of housing as affordable

See also *Economic, Land Use, Open Space and Recreation* Elements, and the *Implementation* Section.

## **Attachments**

### **Attachment 3-1**

#### ***Fiscal Impacts of Various Land Uses***

<b><i>Type of Development</i></b>	<b><i>Advantage to General Government</i></b>	<b><i>Revenue Generated</i></b>
Garden Condominiums (One/two bedrooms)	+	+
Garden Apartments (Three + bedrooms)	—	—
Townhouses (Two/three bedrooms)	—	+
Townhouses (Three/four bedrooms)	—	—
Inexpensive Single-Family Homes (Three/four bedrooms)	—	—
Expensive Single-Family Homes (Three/Four bedrooms)	—	+

*Source: Growth Impact Handbook*, Department of Housing and Community Development, updated, but includes 1996 source material

<b><i>Traffic and Circulation</i></b>	
<b>Type of Housing Unit</b>	<b><u>Trips Per Unit</u></b>
Apartments	8
Single Family Homes	10

*Source: Institute of Traffic Engineers*



***Attachment 3-2***

**School Capital Needs and Costs**

*Case: Anne Arundel County, Maryland (Not current, but Indicative)*

**Public School Children Per Unit**

Type of Development	1 Family	2 Family	3-4 Family	5+Family
K thru 6	0.3049	0.2437	0.2379	0.2032
7 thru 9	0.1616	0.1289	0.1258	0.1074
10 thru 12	0.1573	0.1257	0.1227	0.1048

**Total Cost Per Student**

Type of Development	1 Family	2 Family	3-4 Family	5+Family
K thru 6	\$11,121	\$11,121	\$11,121	\$11,121
7 thru 9	\$14,200	\$14,200	\$14,200	\$14,200
10 thru 12	\$14,754	\$14,754	\$14,754	\$14,754

**Cost Per Dwelling Unit**

Type of Development	1 Family	2 Family	3-4 Family	5+Family
K thru 6	\$3,391	\$2,710	\$2,646	\$2,260
7 thru 9	\$2,295	\$1,830	\$1,786	\$1,525
10 thru 12	\$2,321	\$1,855	\$1,810	\$1,862
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,006</b>	<b>\$6,395</b>	<b>\$6,242</b>	<b>\$6,421</b>

**Source:** Demographics, Anne Arundel County Office of Planning School Standards, Anne Arundel County, Maryland, Public Schools, 1993

# 4

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Summary

Economically, Grafton is a Town with more opportunities than problems. Unemployment is low and new businesses are being established. Some problems that have limited development in the past such as the lack of a supermarket and limited regional public transit are being remedied by the Super Stop and Shop that opened in late 1999 and the MBTA commuter rail station that opened in February 2000.

Grafton's geography, history and on-going efforts to protect its character, its historic resources and its open-space are ready to pay dividends. It is a Town capable of attracting local and regional tourism. It is an attractive place in which to live and work. Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine, with its associated biomedical Research Park, and CenTech High-Technology Park, which provide a location and infrastructure necessary to attract new businesses in growth industries, are in place. However, besides the two development sites mentioned above, Grafton has limited developable land that has appropriate infrastructure and zoning for office, light industry or industrial uses.

Despite its current economic health, Grafton's recent economic history shows that it is as vulnerable to economic down turns as the rest of the Commonwealth. During the New England and national recession of the early 1990s, Grafton had a higher unemployment rate than Massachusetts as a whole. Wyman-Gordon, Grafton's largest employer and largest taxpayer, was sold in late 1999. While the combination of specialized equipment and skilled labor force makes it difficult for this company to move operations out of town, the newly distant management and ownership of the Grafton facility may now be more vulnerable and less supportive of local needs. Successful local economic development requires careful analysis, decision-making, and strong local support. Grafton is a small community with very real fiscal constraints. Therefore, local support must be not only financial one but also must involve the business and residential communities.

### Nature of Economic Development in Town Planning

#### *Issues in Economic Development Planning*

Economic Development is one of the most important of the interesting and challenging components of a *Comprehensive Plan*. Successful Economic Development programs help the community by lowering the tax rate on residential use. These Plans can also attract new jobs and services for residents, making the town more attractive. At the same time, excessive economic development can dramatically change the character and landscape of a Town, increase housing demand and costs, create hardships for long time

residents, add traffic and environmental problems where none existed previously, and jeopardize the feeling of a historic New England Town.

At the *Visioning* Session held at the beginning of this Comprehensive Planning process, residents made it clear that Grafton is especially concerned about protecting its heritage. Here again, Economic Development is a two-edged sword that must be used with care. Grafton's heritage includes rural areas, villages and large mills and other industrial buildings. Without successful economic development, the mills will continue to deteriorate and become drags upon both the economy and Town ambiance<sup>1</sup>. With economic development, additional reuses may be found that will increase the value of the remaining mills, spark new economic activity, and perhaps help to pay some of the costs of upgrading the river, dams and canals.

Too much economic development in the rural less developed areas of the town will have negative impact such as inappropriate building types, increased truck traffic, visible parking lots and storage areas, etc., reducing the value of housing and of the community as a whole. It will take away the "New England Town" character that brought the current residents to Grafton, and will make the town a less attractive place to live, work and visit.

### ***Cooperation and Competition in Economic Development***

Economic Development is unique in Town Planning because it is the one area in which neighboring towns must both cooperate and compete with each other.

*Cooperation* is necessary to attract or support new and growing businesses that require the resources of a region.

*Competition* is necessary because the direct financial benefits of a new business (especially real estate taxes) are concentrated in the town where it locates, while negative impacts such as traffic or air pollution are usually spread over a much wider area and over many neighboring Towns.

Grafton is part of the Blackstone Valley Regional Economic Target Area.<sup>2</sup> To form this group, 11 towns together applied in 1994 to be designated as an Economic Target Area. Grafton is also part of a larger Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) area, which includes 40 municipalities in the south-central area of the State.

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<sup>1</sup> Since this chapter was first drafted, Grafton's largest mill building, in Fisherville, burned to the ground.

<sup>2</sup> Along with Blackstone, Douglas, Hopedale, Mendon, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge

## **The Role of Grafton in Economic Development Planning**

Unlike other aspects of the Comprehensive Plan, economic development usually requires that the Town both control (by carefully using its zoning and other land use regulations) and actively attract businesses at the same time. This creates a basic problem for decision-makers, as they must try to resolve conflicting goals of attracting new tax-paying, job-providing businesses while at the same time protecting the community's semi-rural environment and culture.

To complicate the role of the Town's decision-makers further, the nature of economic activity in the United States and in the entire world is rapidly changing. During the past four decades, we have seen strip malls replace downtowns, shopping centers and regional malls have taken business from strip malls, then "big-box" freestanding stores have weakened the dominance of malls, and most recently, electronic commerce is attacking the future viability of even the big box stores. In the last decade, central cities have started to lose downtown functions to "edge cities". Advances in telecommunication technology and computing power have allowed rural areas to attract small businesses that until a few years ago were parts of big businesses, or could only exist in big city downtowns.

These changes, and others, that we will encounter as we enter the 21st Century, will bring towns such as Grafton both new problems and new opportunities. It requires clear planning and, if economic development is to increase, direct action, including plan changes, zoning changes, changes to structure of government, and possibly an investment in marketing and/or infrastructure development. By completing and implementing this section of the *Grafton Comprehensive Plan*, and continuing efforts to develop *CenTech* Park and Tufts, Grafton is taking a major step toward minimizing problems and still taking advantage of potential opportunities.

Grafton has addressed its economic needs and future during the past seven or eight years through *The Draft Economic Development Plan Element*, prepared by Grafton's Economic Development Committee, dated November 11, 1997, the *Economic Conditions and Prospects Study*, prepared by Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, Final Report, January, 1996, *The Blackstone Valley Regional Economic Target Area Proposal*, dated October 1, 1994, especially pages 27-28, the results of the *Community Survey* and *Visioning* efforts in 1999, and in the development of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

## **General Economic Development Goals**

While each community must set its own Economic Development Goals based on the needs and Vision of the community, the economic development process itself has its own set of objectives, which are based on efficiency.

These general **Goals** are:

**1. *Keep and grow what you have.*** Unless existing businesses are undesirable, or part of an industry that is shrinking or relocating, the Town's primary economic development efforts should be to find out how to help existing businesses to stay, grow and prosper.

**2. *Wage Rates of Major New Employers should not be much Higher or Much Lower than Major Existing Employers.*** If a new business hires a significant portion of their labor force at rates above those currently paid locally elsewhere, they may attract the best employees from existing companies, which leaves them even more vulnerable to losing key employees. Furthermore, wage rates and skill levels not easily met by local labor will attract employees from outside the community, resulting in increases of traffic and pollution.

If the new company requires a totally different labor force, significant changes in both the population and housing demand, and stock could result in potentially disastrous results for long-time residents.

**3. *Update Zoning to Reflect Changes in Business and Technology.*** One economic area that needs to be examined frequently is the regulation of home offices or other businesses run from homes. This not a problem in Grafton, because it allows by special permit home occupations and professional offices in a dwelling. In the past, most home businesses brought traffic, noise, signs or other impacts into a residential community. This is no longer generally true.

Today many home-businesses communicate solely through the telephone, mail, fax, or e-mail. Truck impacts are mostly limited to added visits from express package delivery services. Although recent studies have shown that home businesses do generate additional trips, most of these are off-peak.

On the other hand, these home-businesses can provide many benefits to the community including taxes, employment, attraction of semi-retired professionals (most of whom no longer have school age children that the Town must educate), and the increased safety that is the result of larger daytime populations in the residential neighborhoods. In addition, these businesses provide added income for local commercial businesses, including restaurants, office supply stores, and etceteras.

**4. *Town Marketing*** - With over 350 cities and towns in Massachusetts alone, Economic Development efforts are dependent on creative and effective marketing to "get out the message" about the benefits the Town of Grafton offers to business. Advances in electronic communications allow many types of new and growing companies to consider locating anywhere in the country or even in the world. This is an advantage to communities such as Grafton

because it means that attractive businesses are no longer tied to large cities by a need for face-to-face communication or the hand-delivery of documents, as they were until the end of the last decade. It means that companies have location options, and are likely to pay most attention to those communities that making it easiest to find out why these communities are good sites. Such marketing can be accomplished best as a joint effort of the Town and local businesses or business groups.

**5. *Provide Telecommunication Infrastructure as Good as and as Soon as Possible.*** Advanced telecommunications capabilities can provide many of the same benefits to small towns in the ‘information age’ as high-speed super-highways<sup>3</sup> provided in the manufacturing age. They remove some of the cost and most of the time delays made by distance, so that physical location in relation to consumers less important. However, because communication infrastructure and systems are much less expensive than vehicles, drivers and transportation infrastructure, and because they don’t just reduce, but actually eliminate travel time, their impacts on business location decisions can be even greater.

Telecommunications can also help minimize some of the problems of small town living in ways that make the Town more attractive to people whose education and earnings enable them to select where they want to live.

Three problems common in rural communities and cities of up to medium size are lack of educational opportunities, lack of high quality medical care (especially medical emergencies), and lack of cultural opportunities. As telecommunication expands to include e-mail, Internet and video, these problems can be reduced. Grafton is not as heavily impacted by these problems as other communities because it is located adjacent to Worcester and less than an hour from Boston, with their world-famous hospitals, universities and museums.

## **Tools for Economic Development**

### ***Develop a ‘Site Finder’ Resource:***

Identify and make available information on non-residential land available for development in the Town. Consider using the Internet to make the information on the sites and the community easily accessible. Coordinate with and/or link to regional site-finder resources.

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<sup>3</sup> In fact, the Massachusetts Turnpike, which cuts through Grafton, is rapidly becoming the major east-west superhighway for high-speed telecommunications systems as well as for vehicles.

***Provide Support Services and Groups for Small Businesses and Teleworkers:***

Provide 'business centers' that are meeting spaces and sources for high-speed Internet access, business information, forms and other necessities of business. Meeting space helps telecommuters and home businesses deal with loneliness and needs for mentoring and support. These facilities could be part of the Town library system. Alternatively, they can be private for-profit businesses, or run by a local business association. The importance is to recognize the value of small businesses, provide resources to help attract them, and to help them survive.

***Provide A High Quality, High Speed Communication System:***

Modern businesses require a telecommunications system that can meet needs for speed, quality, and dependability. Recent experience has shown that the growth in the number of communication lines and phone numbers has greatly exceeded all projections. Sufficient circuits and phone numbers should be available to handle two to three times expected growth.

In the past, communication systems were solely the responsibility of State regulatory agencies and the private businesses that provided the service. Today there are many new actors in the field, such as cable companies, which are unregulated, or regulated at the local level. One example is that of cable television companies, now able provide both local phone service and high-speed Internet connections. By negotiating with these companies and/or encouraging competition among communication service providers, the Town can obtain the services that will help attract and hold large and small businesses.

***Capacity:*** 'Capacity' is the ability to handle current and future communication needs without the delays due to an insufficient infrastructure. This usually requires fiber-optics cables to provide service in as much of the system as possible. At a minimum this service should include all main trunk lines and the distributor lines. Even better is providing fiber optics cables to the property line, and best is fiber-optic connections into the building.

***Redundancy:*** 'Redundancy' refers to access to several competing long distance carriers, which assures better service and lower costs.

***Rapid Response:*** 'Rapid Response' is the ability to provide and remove circuits quickly in response to changing business needs. It also means rapid response to service problems, especially interruptions.

***Flexibility:*** 'Flexibility' is the ability to respond to changing client requirements, providing additional services such as call waiting, ISDN, DSL and other high speed data lines, toll free (800, 888, 877 numbers), extra-charge-for-service provider-services (900 numbers), and ability to respond to other new technologies.

As with super highways, having a route through a site is of little value if there are no entrances and exits. In telecommunications, high capacity entrances and exits are known as Points of Presence (POPs). They are the connections between the local

telephone system and the high capacity, inter-city, long distance lines. Also, like super highways, connection to the inter-city system is of limited value if the local distribution system does not have both capacity and flexibility to distribute the communication quickly, accurately and dependably. These local telecommunications networks consist of switching and cable network. To provide the necessary level of service, switches should be electronic instead of mechanical, and the cables should be as much fiber optics and as little copper as possible.

## **Results of Citizen Survey**

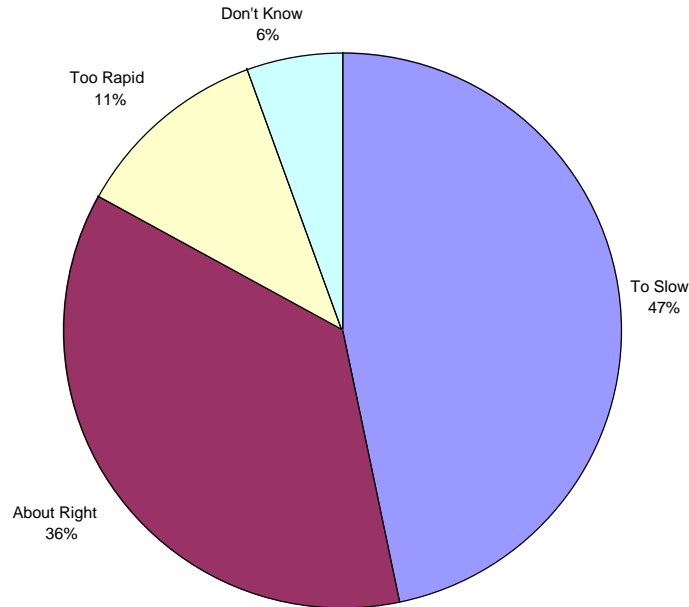
As part of the Comprehensive Planning process, the Planning Board undertook a survey of town residents to obtain information about their likes and dislikes and their life-styles. The Planning Board went to extraordinary effort to give all citizens in Grafton an opportunity to respond to the survey, so that they could make their interests and concerns known. The survey was made available through a variety of means, including distribution at several public meetings held on various subjects. In all, 442 surveys were returned and tabulated.

In the survey, residents were asked about the pace and type of economic growth they would like to see in Grafton. **Chart 4-1** shows that only 11% of respondents answering this question believed that commercial development is proceeding too fast. In contrast, almost half (47%) thought commercial development is too slow, and just over one third (36%) thought that the pace is about right.

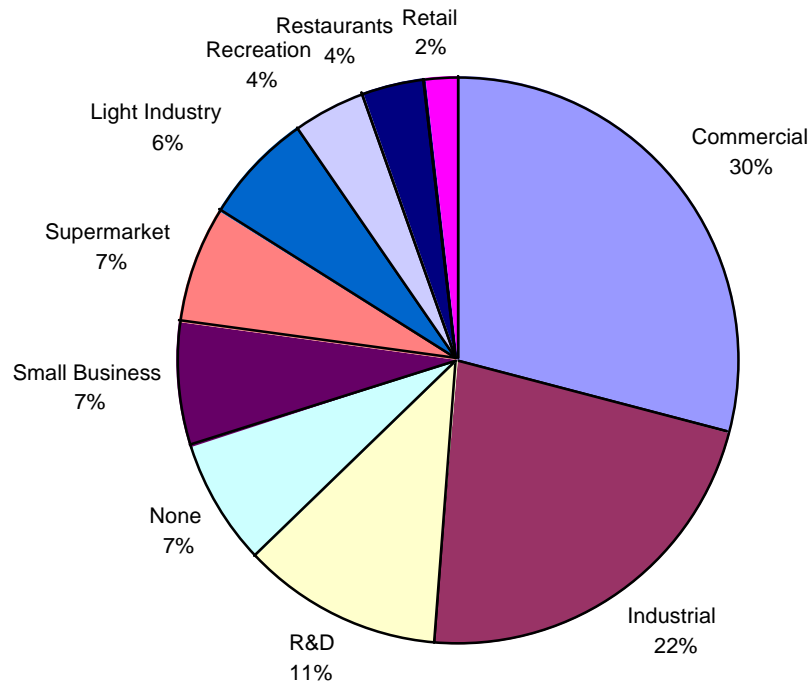
Residents were also asked what types of economic development they thought should be encouraged in Grafton. **Chart 4-2** shows the strong sentiment of the respondents in favor of both commercial and business development. Although commercial has the largest response, the total of industry, research and development and light industry (175) slightly exceeds the commercial plus supermarket and retail (165).



**Chart 4-1 “What is your opinion of the rate of commercial growth in Grafton?”**



**Chart 4-2 “What type of economic development, if any, would you like to see *encouraged* in Grafton?”**



Grafton's Planning and Economic Development Committees made numerous substantive comments that formed the basis of this *Economic Plan*. For example, these committees emphasized the need for Grafton's future economic development efforts to build on the important work already undertaken in approving, developing, and marketing high-tech and medical research/industrial parks. The Economic Development Committee also pointed to a need for additional space suitable for development of ordinary industrial businesses that had neither the requirements nor the financing to pay the costs associated with high-tech development.

Grafton's relatively low tax on industrial and commercial uses that are the same as the residential rates is an important tool for attracting new growth. Carefully planning for preferred economic growth is particularly important so that the Town continues to control its own destiny. Without well thought-out zoning and other Economic Development programs, the Town is at risk from companies eager to take advantage of Grafton's work to date, but which will contribute little to support the Town's overall objectives.

### **Proposed Goals**

Two sets of goals have been developed to guide Grafton's further economic development efforts. The first set focuses on what the Town wants to achieve through its economic development program. It includes the following three goals:

- 1) *Maximize Positive Impacts of Businesses on Grafton and its Residents*
- 2) *Support Existing Businesses*
- 3) *Diversify Grafton's Economy*

The second set of goals is for the economic development effort itself:

- 4) *Focus Efforts on Appropriate Businesses*
- 5) *Improve Business Infrastructure*
- 6) *Market Grafton*

### **Objectives**

The following set of objectives is designed to support the Goals listed on the previous page. Since many of the objectives support more than one Goal, numbers identifying the Goals that each objective supports follow the objective.

***I. Strengthen Tax Base (Goals 1, 2, 4, 6)***

**Why Appropriate**

- Reduces the tax burden on residential land uses (Tax Rate declines 1¢ for each *net*<sup>4</sup> increase of \$466,271 in the Town's Assessed Valuation).
- Diversifies land uses. Diversity protects the economic base and tax base of the community during economic down cycles
- Provides a variety of experiences, resources and employment opportunities for community members.

**Potential Action Items**

- Support existing businesses and help them to grow.
- Promote craft based businesses and antique stores, especially along the Blackstone River, near the mills, and in the Center.
- Support appropriate home businesses.
- Encourage local/regional tourism support businesses.

***II. Encourage Retail/Commercial Development in order to Supply Goods and Services (Goals 1, 2, 5)***

**Why Appropriate**

- Keeps Grafton an active community that provides the goods and services needed by its residents and businesses.
- Commercial facilities attract new businesses and residents.
- Commercial facilities provide employment for young, old, handicapped and less educated residents

**Potential Action Items**

- Determine what goods and services are needed but are unavailable in Grafton.
- Investigate whether Grafton could support a niche market within the region, such as handcrafted furniture, veterinary supplies, abrasives, or other item associated with the community and its existing businesses.
- Review current uses to determine if any land should be rezoned to business zones or to more intensive zones.

***III. Make Grafton more Visible to Potential Businesses (Goals 3, 4, 6)***

**Why Appropriate**

- Helps market Grafton's high-tech and bio-medical business parks.
- Maintains the market for other industrial land.

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<sup>4</sup> Net of any increased costs for services or capital improvements

**Action Items**

- Petition the Turnpike to add Grafton to the *Exit 10* Signs.
- Establish a Town web site to make information on Grafton available worldwide and to attract interest of appropriate, growing businesses.

***IV. Encourage Diverse Rural Occupations (Goals 1, 2, 4)***

**Why Appropriate**

- Maintaining Grafton's rural heritage requires available jobs for people living a rural life style.

**Potential Action Items**

- Work with Tufts to determine what rural skills are or will be in demand.
- Examine the regional market for truck farm goods, organic farms and other specialty agricultural items.

***V. Encourage Home Based Businesses that are compatible with Residential Surroundings (Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 6)***

**Why Appropriate**

- Supports a wide variety of full and part time employment needs otherwise difficult to meet.
- Provides daytime activity and security in residential areas.
- Home businesses can increase the diversity of residents by providing income/employment for semi-retired, handicapped, elderly and others.

**Potential Action Items**

- Set maximum levels for traffic and other impacts of home businesses.
- Encourage courses in techniques for establishing and running home businesses.
- Market Grafton to potential home businesses by emphasizing the Town's character and sense of place.

***VI. Strengthen Existing Businesses (Goal 2)***

**Why Appropriate**

- Grafton's existing businesses are part of its character.
- It is easier and more efficient to keep an existing business and help it grow than to try to attract new businesses.
- New businesses may bring with them part of their current labor force, straining the housing market and changing the Town in other ways.

**Potential Action Items**

- Survey current businesses to determine their problems and growth potentials. Focus on their need for public support, removal of barriers, and need for support services.
- Determine if there is a market for common facilities (i.e. copy center, photographer, etc.) that could reduce the costs of existing businesses.
- Investigate whether additional Town services or staffs are needed to support existing businesses.

***VII. Encourage Use/Reuse of Existing Structures and Commercial Areas***  
***(Goals 1, 2, 5)***

**Why Appropriate**

- Putting an existing structure to use frequently has advantages of removing an eyesore that has created a negative community image, and at the same time can reduce costs to occupants.
- Existing buildings frequently have utilities and other infrastructure in place, reducing costs and disruption to the Town and to existing businesses.
- Reuse of existing structures helps maintain town character and sense of place.
- New users may be able to afford to improve the surrounding environment.

**Potential Action Items**

- Search for funds for dealing with pollution problems and for restoring the river, canals, dams, etc.
- Evaluate the impact of “brownfield” legislation at the State and Federal level and new “brownfield” technologies such as bio-remediation. If appropriate, make this information available to land owners and potential developers.
- Develop a potential reuse plan<sup>5</sup>

***VIII. Encourage Businesses that Depend Upon, Protect and Add to the Natural Areas of the Town*** ***(Goals 1, 4, 6)***

**Why Appropriate**

- By attracting businesses that have goals in harmony with the Town’s goals, financial, political and labor resources can be coordinated and shared, maximizing benefits.

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<sup>5</sup> Although Grafton’s largest mill building was destroyed by fire, there are other unused and underused buildings in Town. Reuse of the mill site remains a critical issue for the Town.

- For growing knowledge-based businesses, the quality of environment and community is one of the most important factors for location.
- Businesses attracted by the quality of Grafton's environment will help attract similar businesses.

**Potential Action Items**

- Follow up on recommendations of *Open Space and Recreation Plan*.
- Search for funds for dealing with pollution problems and for restoring the river, canals, dams, etc.
- Revitalize riverfront and lakefront properties.
- Market Grafton's environmental attractions to businesses and tourists (who are often businessmen on other days of the week).

***IX. Continue to Educate Grafton's Current and Future Labor Force to Meet the Needs of Present and Future Businesses (Goal 1, 2, 3, 5)***

**Why Appropriate**

- Education and work ethics of the labor force is a major attraction for today's knowledge-based industries. They are looking for both educated applicants and opportunities for staff to improve skills and keep up with new developments

**Potential Action Items**

- Coordinate regular and adult education programs with the needs of local businesses.
- Train a labor force as needed, to achieve other goals.
- Teach local crafts, craft marketing and business.
- Continue to provide courses needed by workers at Tufts and other businesses.

***X. Improve the Mutually Beneficial Relationship between the Town and High Tech Business Centers (1, 2, 4, 5, 6)***

**Why Appropriate**

- Tufts Veterinary School and related research programs, and the CenTech Park give Grafton resources that make the Town more attractive to businesses than other communities competing for the same types of new businesses.
- Coordinate efforts supporting these two growth magnets to benefit the town and the projects.
- The concentration of these uses and the Job Corp Center provide an appropriate area for high technology development within the existing community structure.

**Potential Action Items**

- Focus job training on high-tech, biomedical and veterinary careers.
- Investigate joint marketing efforts.
- Investigate joint education programs for staffers and residents.

***XI. Coordinate Economic Development Efforts with Adjacent Communities and with Regional and State-Wide Programs (Goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 6)***

**Why Appropriate**

- Successful Economic Development requires a regional approach as well as local competition.
- The high quality environmental and educational environment sought by knowledge-based businesses does not stop at town lines.

**Potential Action Items**

- Appoint strong Town representatives to committees.
- Encourage coordination with Planning Boards and Economic Development Committees of neighboring Towns.
- Continue to work with the Blackstone Valley Chamber, Worcester Chamber, BURNHCC, Blackstone Valley Institute, CRMPRC, and other regional organizations.

***XII. Encourage Government, Citizen, and Business Groups to Support Achievement of Economic Development Goals (Goals 2, 4, 5, 6)***

**Why Appropriate**

- Implementation of the Economic Development Section of the Comprehensive Plan requires an ongoing effort by the town administration, citizens, and existing businesses.
- Obtaining financial support from the State and Federal Governments and other sources requires a coordinated approach, showing the community's agreement on its goals and strategies.

**Potential Action Items**

- Objective XII is an action item.
- It supports implementation of the other Goals.

***The Existing Situation***

**I. Regional Conditions**

- A. Location** - Grafton is located in the Blackstone River Valley, which stretches from Worcester Massachusetts to Providence, Rhode Island, and includes all the communities in between. Its member communities have a mixed agricultural and industrial heritage. The Blackstone River provided the power

that made this region the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution in the United States. The industries powered by the rivers attracted new workers and created both a demand and supplier (factory villages) for housing for working class people of a variety of national backgrounds. As a result, communities in the Blackstone Valley tend to have a more diverse economy and housing stock than other old New England Towns, which were supported by agriculture.

Grafton is also part of the Worcester metropolitan area. Grafton and the City of Worcester share a short boundary, but Grafton has almost none of the urban characteristics of its larger neighbor. Worcester's commercial and office areas provide services to Grafton's residents. Nearly half of the survey respondents do their food shopping<sup>6</sup> in Worcester and more than a quarter do other shopping there as well. More Grafton residents work in Worcester (50 out of 442 survey respondents) than in any other community outside of Grafton itself.<sup>7</sup>

## **B. Access**

**1. Roads** - Grafton is both split and served by I-90, which is known as the Massachusetts Turnpike, the major east-west highway in the Commonwealth. Although there are not Turnpike exits within the Town, Exit 10 is just to the west of the Town line, and provides easy access to the Town. Despite the closeness of the town line to the Turnpike's exit, Grafton is not mentioned on any of the signs, making it more difficult for businesses and tourists to find. Boston's Outer Beltway, Route I-495, is only two towns away from Grafton, and provides limited access to the southern and eastern parts of the Town via Route 140. However, this access is somewhat restricted by the rural character of the connecting roads. They are either narrow, heavily used, or both, making travel slow. The configuration of some of the major intersections is especially difficult for large trucks.

**2. Rail** - Grafton has several freight rail lines. In February 2000 the Mass Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) opened a commuter station in Grafton, serving the Boston-Worcester commuter rail line.

**3. Air** - The Grafton airport has been replaced by a park and playground, and is now surrounded by residential areas. Grafton does have access to Worcester's airport; however, the Worcester airport currently has limited commercial service, largely because of its poor ground access.

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<sup>6</sup> The Survey was conducted prior to the opening of the Super Stop and Shop in late 1999

<sup>7</sup> All information in this paragraph is from the final tally of the Grafton *Community Survey* that had 442 respondents



Last year only 76,000 passengers used Worcester Airport despite over \$ 30,000,000 in improvements made during the 1990s. Worcester has requested that Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport) take over management and responsibility for the airport. Massport is resisting taking this responsibility unless a new road is built to connect the Worcester Airport directly to I-290. However, the new road would require the demolition of 30 to 50 houses, and possibly a school and park.

At the end of 1999, the Wall Street Journal reported a Delta Airlines subsidiary would join US Airways Express, becoming the second airline to offer scheduled flights out of Worcester Airport. According to the article, American Eagle and Spirit are also considering serving Worcester in 2000.<sup>8</sup>

At least in the short term, Boston's Logan Airport and Providence's Green Airport serve Grafton's residents and businesses' primary air travel and cargo requirements.

## **II. Regional Economic Trends and Conditions**

In 1996, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) published Economic Conditions and Prospects Study. That report was based on research into the current conditions and recent trends in the CMRPC region's economy, a survey of local businesses, and analysis of the public and private economic resources available in the region.

That study, now more than four years old, found the region was in the process of an economic transition from a manufacturing-based economy to a service-based economy. Between 1984 and 1994, major declines took place in almost all of the manufacturing sectors in the region. This was led by the loss of over 3,000 jobs in fabricated metal products and about 2,000 jobs each in industrial machinery, equipment, stone, clay and glass products and textile mill products. In all, 13,500 manufacturing jobs were lost. In the same period, the region added 22,000 service sector jobs. Of these, one third were in health care.

The survey of businesses found that a major problem was finding appropriately trained employees. Many workers not only lacked technical education and skills, but also did not even have basic competency in reading, writing and mathematics.

The study found that the region had a high level of capacity in its highways, water and sewer systems. But the CMRPC's report also indicated that the

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<sup>8</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, December 22, 1999, page WE1

actual sites where industries were located were often poorly served by the transportation network and not served at all by public water and sewer.

Manufacturing companies reported that their largest problems were energy costs, property taxes, lack of easy access to air transportation, and the availability of skilled labor force.

### **III. Local Conditions**

#### **A. Economic Base**

This plan examines the economic strength and character of Grafton from three different aspects:

##### **Employment:**

- What jobs are available in Town.
- How the number and type of jobs have changed over time.
- How the jobs available compare to the number and types of jobs that are available in near-by towns, the region, the State and the Country.

##### **Resident Work Force:**

- What types of jobs residents of the Town already have.
- Where they work.
- How much they earn.
- How many residents are unemployed and looking for work.

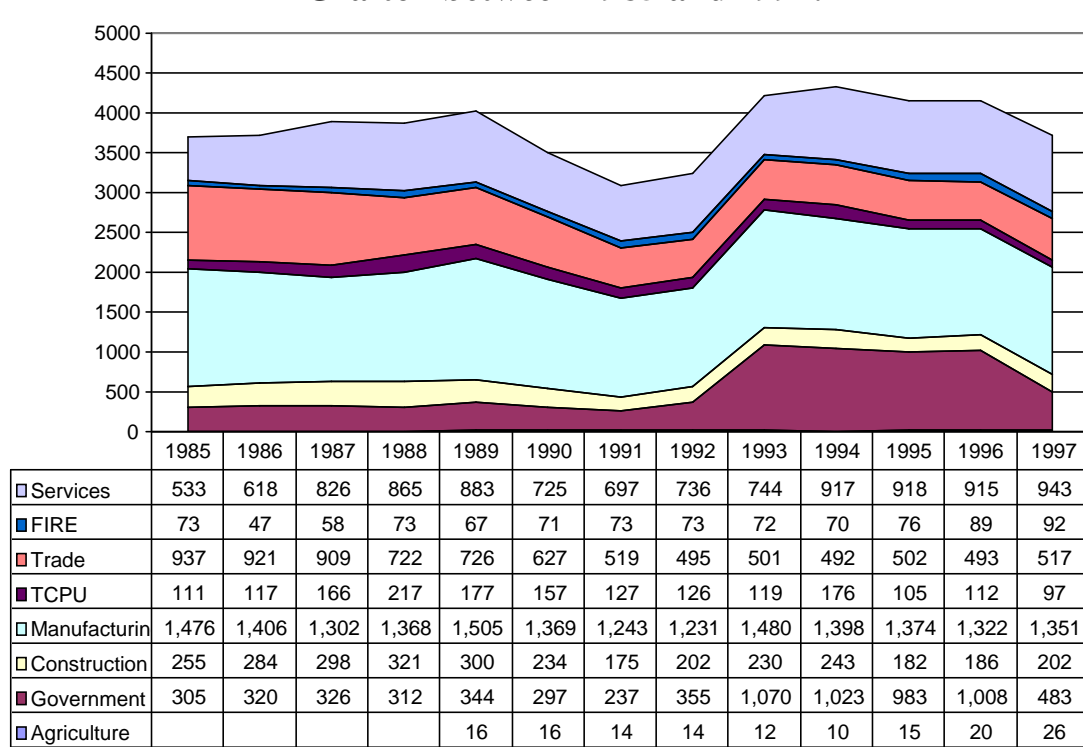
##### **Businesses:**

- Types and sizes of businesses in town.
- Whether or not the ownership is local.
- Whether businesses are growing or declining.
- The share of businesses largely dependent on the town's residents and other businesses for income, as compared to the share of businesses that primarily sell into the larger economy.
- Contributions of businesses to the Town's tax base.

## B. Employment

Total employment in Grafton in 1997 was 3,711 people.<sup>9</sup> According to Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training, this was a decline of over 400 people from the previous year and even below the average of the previous 10 years (1988-1997) that was 3,863.<sup>10</sup> **Chart 4-3** summarizes employment trends in Grafton between 1985 and 1997.

**Chart 4-3 Total Employment by Type - Employment trends in Grafton between 1985 and 1997.**



*Source:* Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Employment and training (ES-202 Series) 1999. Most recent information is available at [www.detma.org/local/Grafton](http://www.detma.org/local/Grafton).

The data clearly shows dramatic loss of employment during the national recession of the early 1990s, felt particularly strongly in New England. During this period many companies either disappeared or refocused, restructuring their missions and employment. Following the recession, a strong economy and technological advances led to the creation of new companies, and with it rising employment once again.

<sup>9</sup> *Source:* Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Employment and Training (ES-202 Series, 1999)

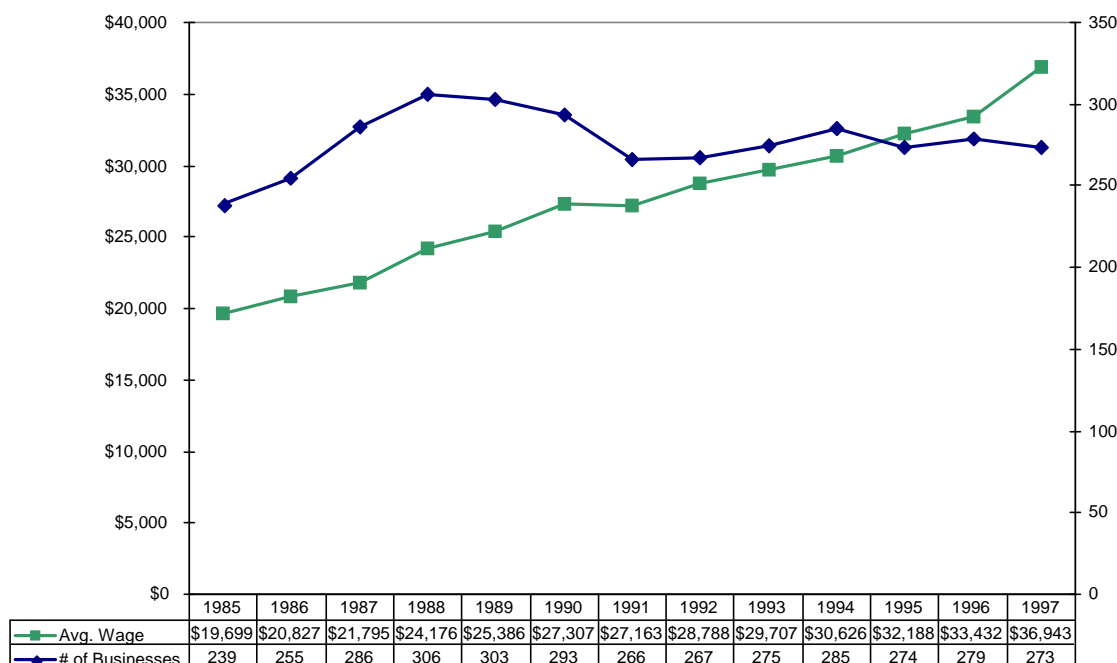
<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Grafton was apparently fortunate during the recession, because there was a dramatic increase in government employment that rose from around 300 persons in the 1980s to over 1,000 employees in the four years between 1993 and 1996 before dropping to fewer than 500 in 1997.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, no one with whom the planning team has spoken has been able to identify where these almost 700 additional government employees were working during this period. Until this question can be answered there remains the possibility that these numbers are a mistake or statistical fluke.

### C. Businesses

In 1997, there were 273 business establishments in Grafton, employing a total of 3,711 full and part time workers. These jobs provided workers with an average wage of \$36,943, was among the lowest wage in the region.

**Chart 4-4 Average Wages and Number of Businesses**



Source: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Employment and Training (ES-202 Series) 1999

### D. Change in Businesses

According to information provided by Office of the Secretary of State, 11 new corporations formed or moved into Grafton in 1998, while six dissolved or withdrew from operations in the Town.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Telecommuting, where a business or employee either operate from a home office or from a satellite office, has become an important factor in the economy. The use of the home computer and the Internet, coupled with more frequent employer policies of hiring contract workers rather than full-time staff, is making telecommuting a growing segment of the employment base. Statistics on telecommuting are not yet kept, so it is difficult at present to determine the extent of this segment of Grafton's workforce.

A review of the employment trends in Grafton shows a dramatic rise in trade during the last half of the 1990s. Manufacturing also grew during this period. Not surprisingly, construction also rose, due to residential development and to new facilities required by the Trade and Manufacturing expansion.

Services, which grew rapidly during the end of the previous decade, declined somewhat. ***FIRE*** (***F***inance, ***I***nsurance, and ***R***eal ***E***state) is at a low level, which indicates they are primarily serving the local community.

#### **E. Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment**

As **Chart 4-5** shows, Grafton has a strong economy with low unemployment. This chart also shows that, despite the current strength of the economy, the Town's population is subject to the impact of regional and national recessions, as indicated by the 10% unemployment rate in 1991. In a middle-class community such as Grafton, prolonged widespread unemployment can impact housing values as well as town and resident incomes. For these reasons, Grafton should continue its efforts to expand and diversify employment, and improve access to jobs and to potential employees who live in Town but work elsewhere.

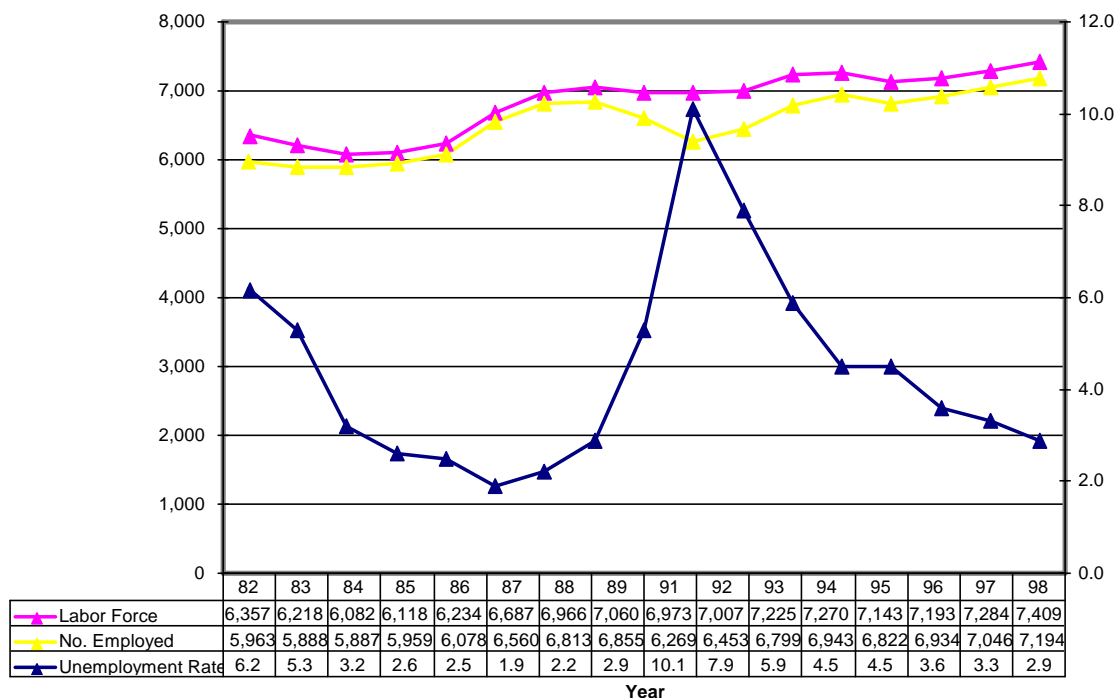
According to the Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training (DET), the estimated average size of the labor force<sup>12</sup> in 1998 in Grafton was 7,409 persons. The average unemployment rate in Grafton for January 1998 stood at 2.9% percent (or 215 persons), which was lower than the State average unemployment rate of 3.3% percent for the same period. Unemployment since the 1990's has, on a whole, continued to decrease both nationally and locally. Historically, Grafton has maintained an unemployment rate slightly below or on par with State and Regional levels. The one exception was 1991 when Grafton had an unemployment rate of 10.3%, compared to the statewide number of 9.1%. That year marked the peak of the recession both for Grafton and for Massachusetts.

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<sup>12</sup> The total labor force includes both military personnel and all civilians over the age of 16 who work for pay or work within a family enterprise, as well as unemployed persons actively seeking work.



**Chart 4-5 Labor Force and Unemployment Rate**



Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training

In 1989, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the median household income in Grafton at \$ 42,310<sup>13</sup>, with an average per capita income of \$ 17,313. Family income levels in Grafton have been generally above regional and State levels. Those living below the poverty level in Grafton in 1989 comprised 5% of the Town's population, whereas the statewide average was 8.9% of the population.<sup>14</sup>

## **F. Tax Base**

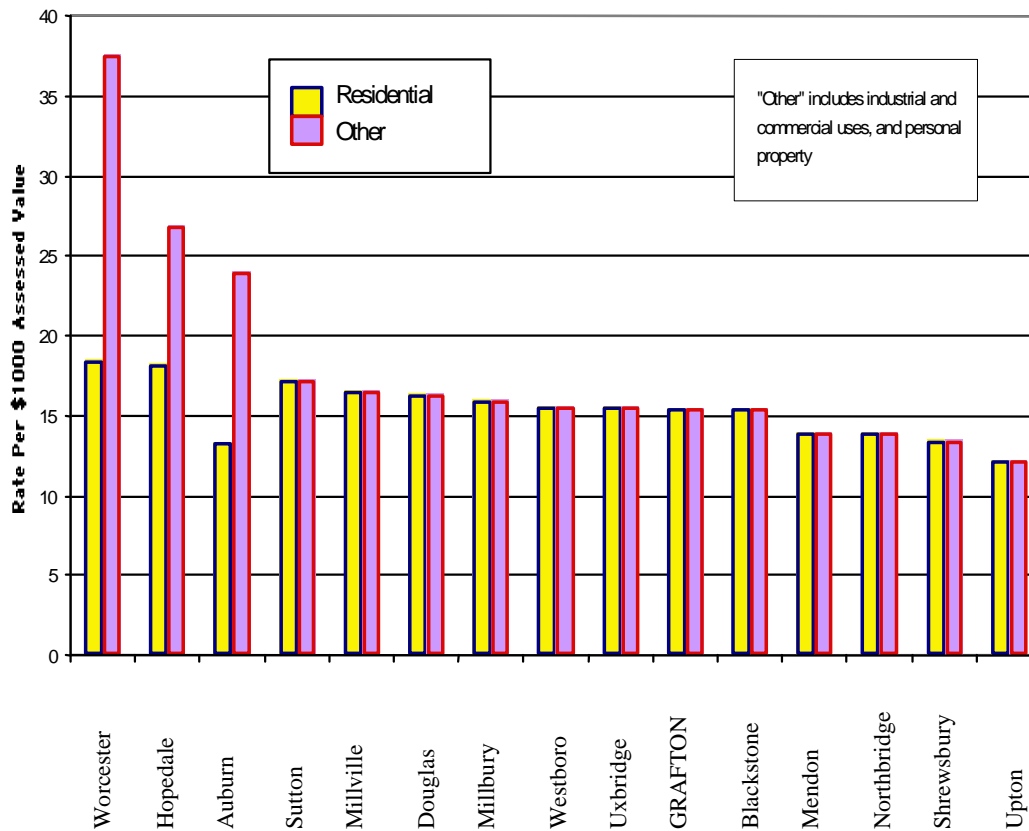
High taxes relative to those in surrounding communities can reduce the attractiveness of the community to new businesses and the competitiveness of existing ones. Under Massachusetts laws, local governments can shift the tax burden among different land uses by classifying property and setting different tax rates for each property class. Grafton has chosen not to use tax classification. This means that all taxable property pays taxes at the same tax rate. By contrast, Worcester, Hopedale and Auburn charge higher tax rates for industrial and commercial properties than they do for residential property. In

<sup>13</sup> Source: 1990 US Census, CHP-L-83, Table 3

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Worcester, for example, the tax rate for industrial and commercial property is about twice the rate for residential property. Tax rates by classification are shown in **Chart 4-6**.

**Chart 4-6 Tax Rates in Grafton and Near-by Communities**

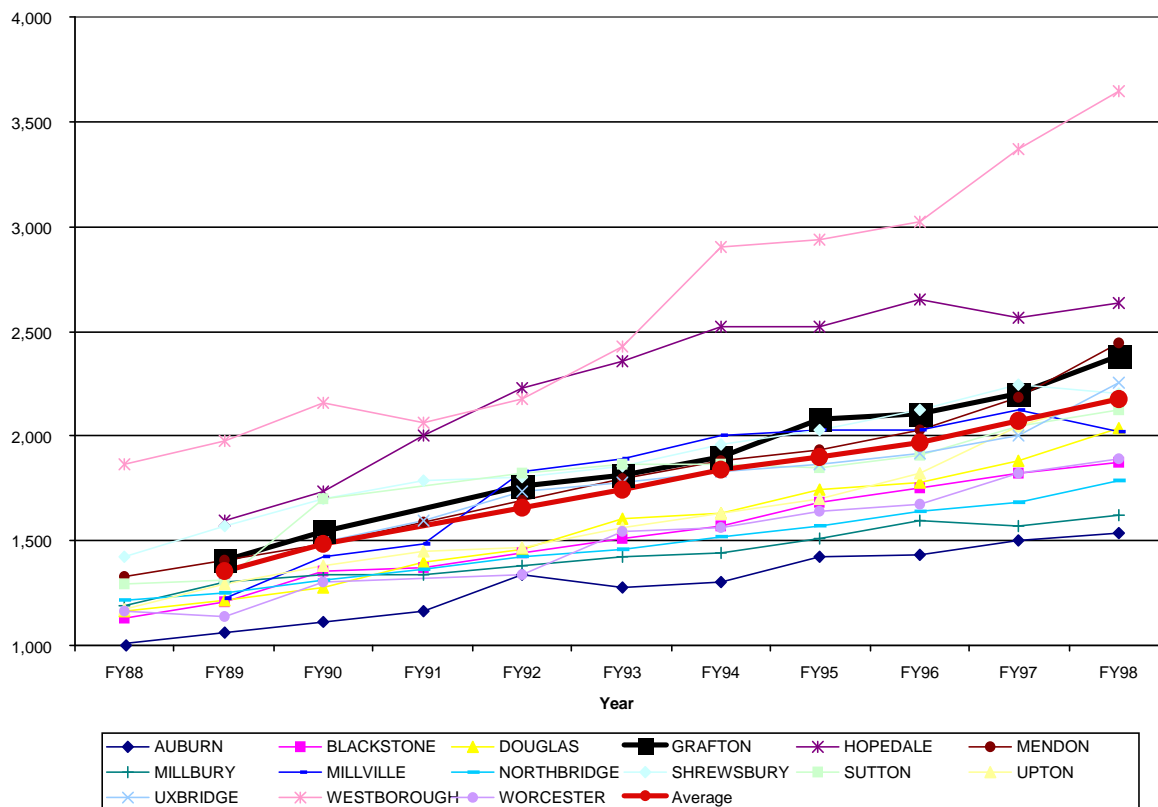


Source: "At a Glance Tax Rate" for the Individual Towns, Massachusetts Department of Revenue  
- Division of Local Service, June 30, 1999



The single-family tax bill is result of an interaction of house values and tax rates. The average 1998 tax bill for a single-family home in Grafton was approximately \$2,386. This was slightly above the average of near-by communities until 1998, when it increased more than \$ 200 above the average. If Hopedale and Westborough were removed from the table, Grafton would be significantly above the average for the remaining communities.

**Chart 4-7 Average Single Family Grafton Tax Bills**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenues, 1999

**Table 4-1 Residential Tax Rates in Grafton and Near-by Communities**

<b>FY</b>	<b>Auburn*</b>	<b>Blackstone</b>	<b>Douglas</b>	<b>Grafton</b>	<b>Hopedale*</b>	<b>Mendon</b>	<b>Millbury</b>	<b>Millville</b>
<b>88</b>	15.12	10.30	13.84	N/A	N/A	11.20	9.94	N/A
<b>89</b>	8.36	10.80	14.26	8.50	11.33	11.90	10.78	14.00
<b>90</b>	8.71	12.00	10.54	9.40	11.98	9.27	11.03	11.00
<b>91</b>	9.08	10.75	11.28	N/A	13.25	9.99	10.46	11.55
<b>92</b>	10.89	11.60	12.60	11.83	16.42	11.08	10.80	15.68
<b>93</b>	10.40	13.12	14.06	12.96	18.84	12.41	11.10	16.78
<b>94</b>	10.57	13.12	14.16	13.46	20.18	12.89	13.26	17.45
<b>95</b>	12.94	14.37	14.97	14.70	20.14	13.41	13.73	17.79
<b>96</b>	12.94	14.84	15.40	14.74	19.36	13.41	14.51	16.71
<b>97</b>	13.51	15.32	16.02	15.30	18.30	14.27	14.27	17.40
<b>98</b>	13.34	14.77	17.15	15.33	18.26	15.72	14.60	16.36
<b>FY</b>	<b>Northbridge</b>	<b>Shrewsbury</b>	<b>Sutton</b>	<b>Upton</b>	<b>Uxbridge</b>	<b>Westborough</b>	<b>Worcester</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>88</b>	17.29	14.62	9.76	9.44	N/A	9.90	13.39	12.25
<b>89</b>	9.32	9.36	10.20	10.33	8.44	10.30	9.75	10.51
<b>90</b>	9.73	10.02	12.92	7.05	9.50	11.10	9.15	10.23
<b>91</b>	10.00	10.40	N/A	7.20	10.19	10.90	N/A	10.42
<b>92</b>	11.51	11.93	10.38	8.08	13.77	12.25	11.23	12.00
<b>93</b>	11.85	12.22	14.00	9.23	14.15	14.00	13.72	13.26
<b>94</b>	12.81	12.74	15.01	9.51	14.49	16.53	15.57	14.07
<b>95</b>	12.55	13.38	14.78	9.77	15.86	16.37	16.32	14.74
<b>96</b>	13.95	13.84	15.02	10.61	16.21	16.40	17.41	15.02
<b>97</b>	14.32	14.42	15.37	11.74	16.77	16.16	18.67	15.46
<b>98</b>	14.82	13.32	15.66	12.36	15.84	16.96	18.06	15.50

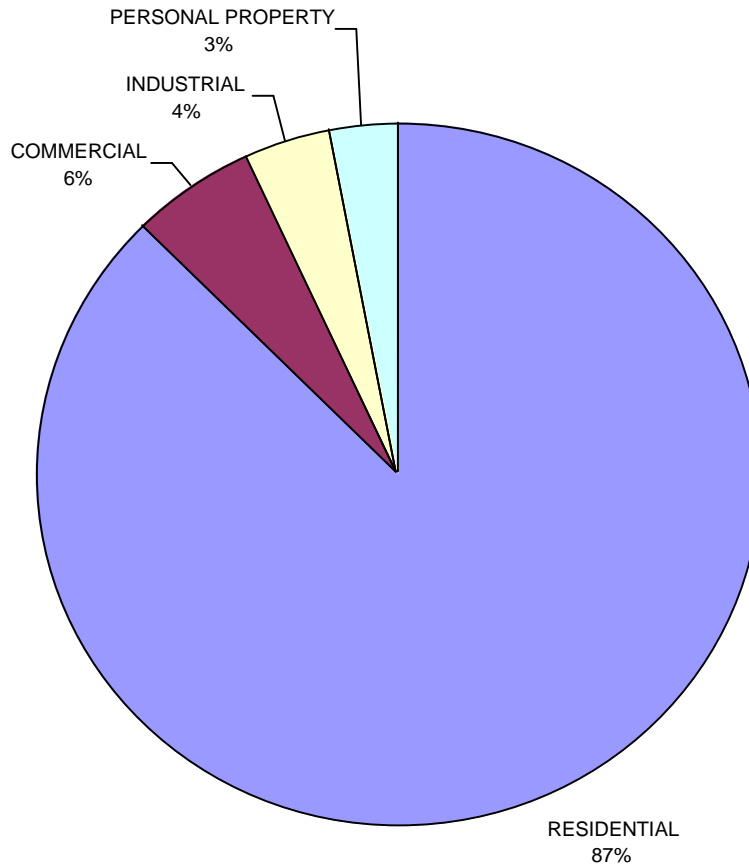
*\*Communities using tax classification, tax rates for non-residential property is higher than shown.*

*N/A = not available.*

*Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenues, 1999*

In general, tax-paying non-residential land uses are a fiscal “plus” for a Town, providing more income from taxes and fees than the cost of the services they consume. Residential uses are a fiscal “negative”. The main contributing factor to this is the cost of educating the Town’s children. Like many suburban and rural communities, Grafton’s tax base is overwhelmingly residential. In 1997, 87% of the assessed value of land in the Town was in residential use.

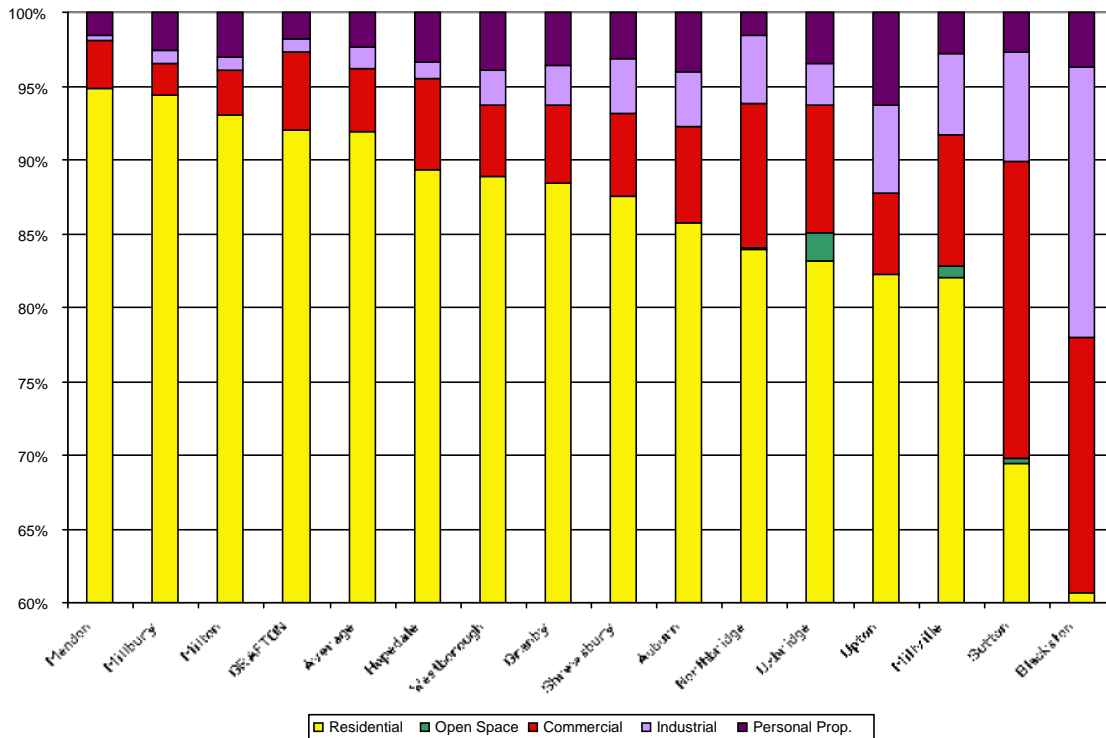
**Chart 4-8 Grafton Tax Base by Use, 1998**



*Source:* Massachusetts Department of Revenues, 1999

Although high tax rates are seen as negative factors in attracting new businesses, the actual impact on a business' decision to locate or stay in a town is generally unlikely to be high tax rates (unless they are far above neighboring or competing communities). Other factors, such as access (including high-speed, dependable communication access), land costs, availability of suitable sites or buildings, availability of utilities, and availability of trained employees are likely to be much more important. Companies attracted by low tax rates or special tax deals are more likely to move on when a better deal is offered them somewhere else.

**Chart 4-9 Make Up of Tax Base in Grafton and Near-by Communities**



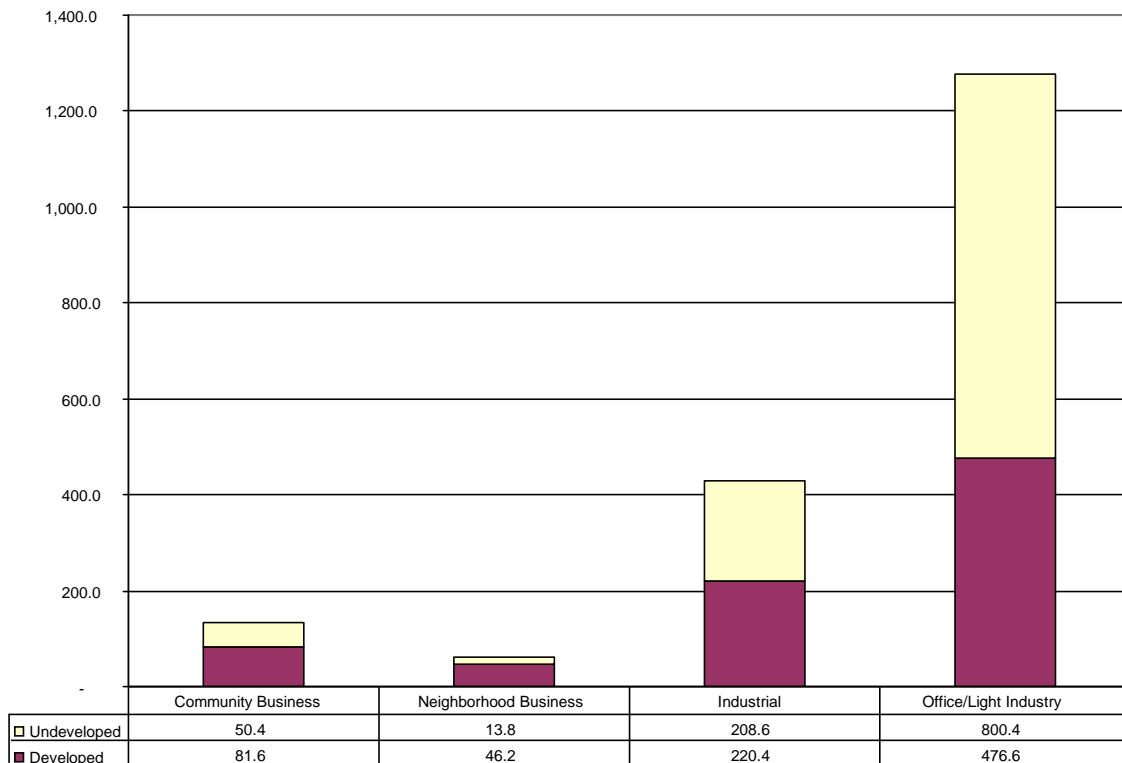
*Source:* Massachusetts Department of Revenues, 1999

## **G. Land Available for Development**

In 1999, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), in conjunction with the Massachusetts Geographic Information System and the Department of Environmental Affairs, undertook a build out analysis of Grafton. The Town of Grafton reviewed the preliminary results, and recommended substantial changes and corrections. After considering the Town's input, CMRPC produced a series of maps and spreadsheets projecting the maximum buildout (development) of Grafton under current zoning, environmental and physical development constraints. This section is based on this information.

Grafton has 1207 acres of commercially zoned land, 825 acres (68%) of which are currently developed. **Chart 4-10** shows the number of developed and undeveloped acres, by zone.

**Chart 4-10 Number Of Developed And Undeveloped Acres In Grafton, By Zone**

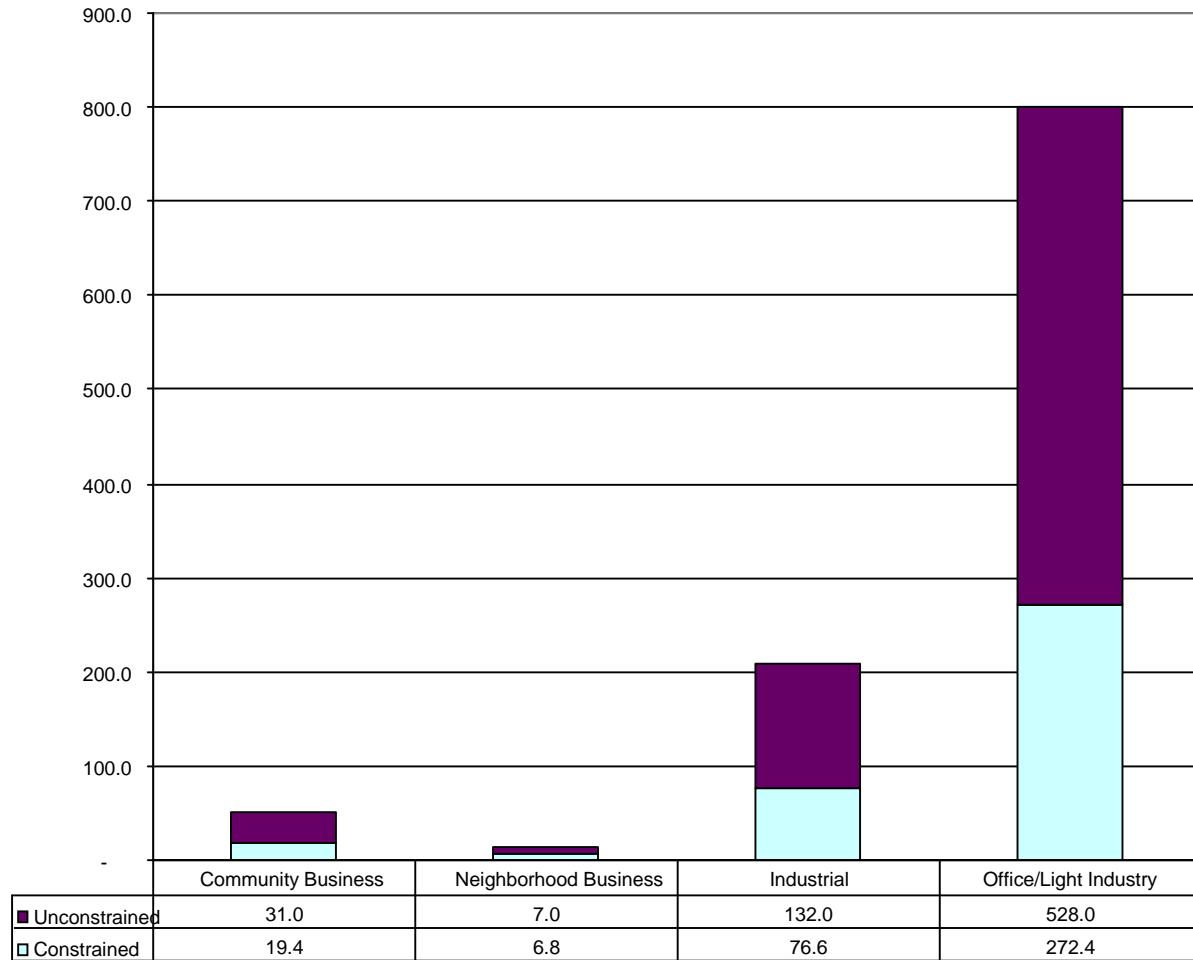


*Source:* CMRCP Build-Out Analysis, 2000

It is not possible to develop all the undeveloped land. Much of it is constrained by slope or other environmental constraints, although these constraints cannot be considered either absolute or permanent. Physical development constraints (such as steep slopes) can be overcome today by additional investment, and perhaps in the future by even newer technologies. Environmental constraints may also change because of changes in political and/or technological situations. On the other hand, it is not safe to assume that all new development will be limited to currently undeveloped land. Physical or economic obsolescence, fire, flood, or simply change in ownership may result in demolition of existing development and its eventual replacement by new facilities serving different uses. In addition, the Town may change zoning to meet its objectives or to implement a new Plan.

**Chart 4-11** separates the constrained and unconstrained land in Grafton's commercial zones.

**Chart 4-11 Constrained And Unconstrained Land In Grafton's Commercial Zones**



*Source:* CMRCP Build-Out Analysis, 2000

Of the undeveloped land, 375 acres (45%) are constrained by physical or environmental barriers. Under current zoning, development, and environmental constraints, opportunities for commercial development in Grafton are primarily in the Office/Light Industry Zone and to a lesser extent in the Industrial Zone. Together these zones contain 660 acres of commercially zoned undeveloped, unconstrained land, or 95% of all such land in Grafton.

## **Locations of Potential Commercial Development in Grafton**

Grafton's available non-residential land suitable for development are primarily located on the Town's northern and southern borders, with an additional large parcel just south of the Massachusetts Turnpike Right of Way. While these sites are well located in the sense that their development will have minimal impacts on residential areas, they are far from the high-speed road system. Local access, by two-lane road, decreases the attractiveness to companies relying on large trucks for shipping or requiring large numbers of workers. Commercially zoned land near Grafton's northern border does have good access to rail lines, including freight and the new Grafton commuter rail station.

As noted in the Land Use Element, Grafton has four zoning districts that allow commercial and industrial development:

### **Commercial and Industrial Zones in Grafton**

**Table 4-2**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Available</b>	<b>Not Constrained or Lightly Constrained*</b>
Neighborhood Business	NB	60	46	14	11
Community Business	CB	132	81	51	46
Office/Light Industry	OLI	1,277	477	800	711
Industrial	I	429	231	198	172

*Source: CMRCP Build-Out Analysis, 2000*

*\* No constraint and constrained by 8-15% slope only  
Totals may not add due to rounding*

Grafton's available non-residential lands, its road and rail access, the existing sites being prepared and marketed for biomedical development, its attractive historic and open-space sites and its public infrastructure provide outstanding opportunities for the attraction and establishment of sustainable, good-paying, and desirable businesses and jobs.

## **Recommended Actions and Policies**

- 1. Develop specific targets for economic development efforts**, and then detail the marketing and business development steps needed to achieve them. Recommended targets are in:
  - (a) Growing biomedical high-tech-sectors.
  - (b) Home/small businesses, especially ‘incubating’ new businesses by researching high-tech/biomedical sites that will provide support services to Tufts and CenTech Park and their spin-offs.
  - (c) Regional tourism, based on the attractiveness of Grafton’s historic resources, scenic areas, rivers and open spaces, and opportunities for on- and off-road bicycling.<sup>15</sup>
  - (d) Continuous-Care and Assisted-Living residential projects.
  
- 2. Encourage existing businesses to establish local and/or town-wide organizations** with a purpose of upgrading existing commercial areas by
  - (a) *Improving signage.*
  - (b) Continuing preparations for foreign and other visitors to Biomedical and High tech sites.
  - (c) *Landscaping*, especially concealing parking and storage areas
  - (d) *Limiting the number and frequency of curb cuts*, encouraging shared entrances and parking
  - (e) *Coordinating marketing efforts*, business hours, special sales, and other events
  - (f) *Developing town or area logos* and other identifying marks.
  
- 3. Work with existing businesses to help them stay and grow in Grafton.**
  
- 4. Find out from existing businesses the following:**
  - (a) *What other businesses they would like to see locate in Town*
  - (b) *Determine whether or not they may need training programs or other help in hiring and training employees*

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<sup>15</sup> *Note:* Tourism is both an income source and a marketing tool, and it also helps pay for the acquisition and maintenance of open space and historic areas.



5. **Continue to assign specific Grafton representatives** to work with regional and statewide economic development efforts.
6. **Put in place an economic development marketing program** for Grafton, enlisting support from local businesses to help promote Grafton in their literature and at sales shows and conferences.
7. **Review zoning and other regulations** to assure that they do not unnecessarily hamper business development and expansion. Revise regulations as appropriate.
8. **Learn about, and when appropriate, apply for State and Federal support programs** for economic development planning and projects.
9. **Plan for decline in existing businesses** in response to economic changes. For example, consider how the recently opened Super-Stop and Shop may impact Grafton's existing businesses.
10. **Evaluate Assisted-Living and Continuous-Care residential** projects as sources of jobs and taxes.

**Compatibility Of Economics Recommendations With Economics Goals**

**Table 4-3**

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Goals</b>					
	Maximize Positive impacts of Businesses on Grafton and its Residents	Support Existing Businesses	Diversify Grafton's Economy	Focus Efforts on Appropriate Businesses	Improve Business Infrastructure	Market Grafton
Develop a 'Site Finder' Resource			•			
Provide A High Quality, High Speed Communication System within the Town					•	
Provide Support Services and Groups for Small Businesses and Teleworkers		•	•	•		•
Encourage existing businesses to establish local and/or town-wide organizations		•	•	•		•
Prepare an economic development effort targeting biomedical high-tech-sectors			•	•		•
Prepare an economic development effort targeting home/small businesses			•	•		
Prepare an economic development effort targeting regional tourism		•	•	•		
Prepare an economic development effort targeting Continuous-Care and Assisted-Living residential projects			•	•		

Recommendations	Goals					
	Maximize Positive impacts of Businesses on Grafton and its Residents	Support Existing Businesses	Diversify Grafton's Economy	Focus Efforts on Appropriate Businesses	Improve Business Infrastructure	Market Grafton
Upgrade existing commercial areas by improving signage	●	●				
Limit the number and frequency of curb cuts, encouraging shared entrances and parking	●	●				
Continue preparations for foreign and other visitors to Bio/High-Tech sites	●	●				●
Coordinate marketing efforts, business hours, special sales and other events		●				●
Develop town or area logos and other identifying marks						●
Develop guidelines for landscaping in the commercial, especially concealing parking and storage areas	●					●
Work with existing businesses to help them stay and grow in Grafton		●				
Find out from existing businesses what other businesses they would like to see locate in Town		●				●

Recommendations	Goals					
	Maximize Positive impacts of Businesses on Grafton and its Residents	Support Existing Businesses	Diversify Grafton's Economy	Focus Efforts on Appropriate Businesses	Improve Business Infrastructure	Market Grafton
Continue to assign specific Grafton representatives to work with regional and statewide economic development efforts		•			•	
Learn about, and when appropriate, apply for State and Federal support programs for economic development planning and projects		•	•		•	
Put in place an economic development marketing program for Grafton, enlisting support from local businesses						•
Review zoning and other regulations to assure that they do not unnecessarily hamper business development and expansion. Revise regulations as appropriate	•	•	•		•	
Plan for decline in existing businesses in response to economic changes		•	•		•	•

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE**

**Table 4-4**

<i><b>Timeline</b></i>	<i><b>Tasks</b></i>	<i><b>Responsible Agency</b></i>
<b>Phase I</b>	Develop a 'Site Finder' Resource	Economic Development Commission & Planning Board
	Provide Support Services and Groups for Small Businesses and Teleworkers	Economic Development Commission & Planning Board
	Encourage existing businesses to establish local and/or town-wide organizations	Economic Development Commission & Planning Board
	Prepare an economic development effort targeting regional tourism	Economic Development Commission
	Upgrade existing commercial areas by improving signage	Economic Development Commission & Planning Board
	Limit the number and frequency of curb cuts, encouraging shared entrances and parking	Planning Board Town Meeting
	Continue preparations for foreign and other visitors to Bio/High-Tech sites	Economic Development Commission
	Develop guidelines for landscaping in the commercial districts, especially concealing parking and storage areas	Planning Board Town Meeting
	Work with existing businesses to help them stay and grow in Grafton	Economic Development Commission
	Find out from existing businesses what other businesses they would like to see locate in Town	Economic Development Commission
	Continue to assign specific Grafton representatives to work with regional and statewide economic development efforts	Economic Development Commission & Board of Selectmen
	Learn about, and when appropriate, apply for State and Federal support programs for economic development planning and projects	Economic Development Commission & Planning Board
	Put in place an economic development marketing program for Grafton, enlisting support from local businesses	Economic Development Commission

<i><b>Timeline</b></i>	<i><b>Tasks</b></i>	<i><b>Responsible Agency</b></i>
<b>Phase II</b>	Provide A High Quality, High Speed Communication System within the Town	Economic Development Commission & Board of Selectmen
	Prepare an economic development effort targeting biomedical high-tech-sectors	Economic Development Commission & Planning Board
	Prepare an economic development effort targeting home/small businesses	Economic Development Commission & Planning Board
	Coordinate marketing efforts, business hours, special sales and other events	Economic Development Commission
	Develop town or area logos and other identifying marks	Economic Development Commission & Planning Board
	Review zoning and other regulations to assure that they do not unnecessarily hamper business development and expansion. Revise regulations as appropriate	Economic Development Commission & Planning Board  Town Meeting
	Plan for decline in existing businesses in response to economic changes	Economic Development Commission & Planning Board
<b>Phase III</b>	Prepare an economic development effort targeting Continuous-Care and Assisted-Living residential projects	Economic Development Commission & Planning Board



## RESOURCES

(OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, NATURAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL)

# 5

### Introduction

Grafton has recently updated its *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, which examines and inventories many of the natural resources in Grafton<sup>1</sup>. This *Comprehensive Community Comprehensive Plan* incorporates that document by reference.

#### *Visioning Process*

During the ‘Visioning’ portion of Comprehensive Plan preparations, Grafton residents made it clear they wish to maintain the natural, cultural, and historical resources that make the Town unique. The Vision Statement reflects these sentiments, and the Goals accompanying the statement reinforce them. Goals that especially relate to maintaining and/or improving the Town’s natural, cultural and historical resources are listed below.

#### *Vision Statement*

*“Grafton is a small Town with a strong sense of community, made up of historical New England villages and new neighborhoods whose residents are its most vital asset, **where pastoral landscapes are valued, where open space preservation is considered integral to our town's character,** and where carefully-planned residential as well as non-residential development enhance the community's economic stability.”*

#### *Goals to Achieve the Vision*

- Preserve Grafton’s Town character.
- Permanently protect Grafton’s natural resources, and its historic neighborhoods and structures.
- Preserve the New England Villages of North Grafton, Fisherville, Farnumsville, the Town Center, and other older neighborhoods
- Increase the already high level of Civic Pride.

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<sup>1</sup> 1999 *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, Town of Grafton, Massachusetts.



### ***Goals Stated in the Open Space and Recreation Plan***

The *Goals* listed below, identified in the *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, are also valid for Grafton's natural and historical resources.

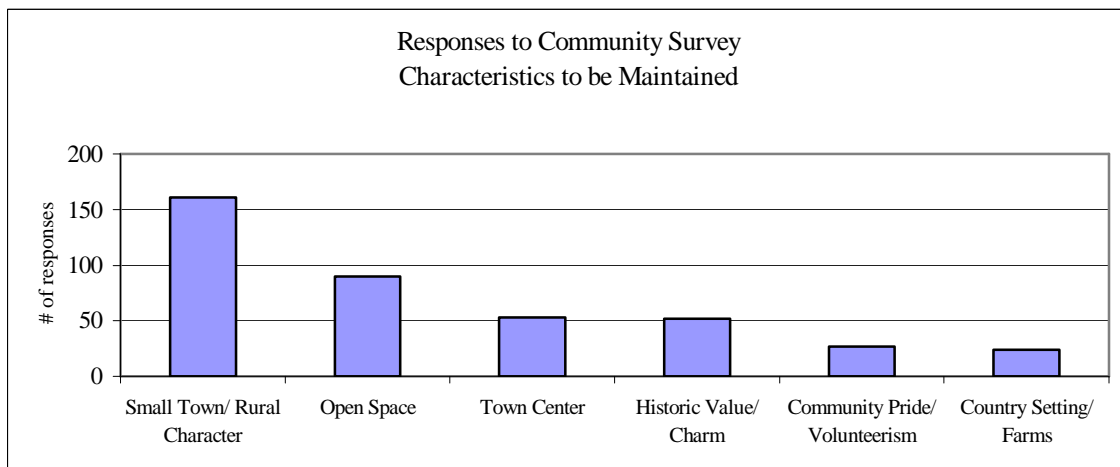
- Preserve Grafton's Town character.
- Preserve and enhance Grafton's water resources.
- Protect and conserve Grafton's land resources.
- Enhance use of existing recreation and conservation areas.
- Provide Grafton with varied and geographically balanced recreational facilities and opportunities.

Phases for achieving Goals and Policies show sequence and do not represent time periods. Actual dates are dependent on Town actions and funding availability.

### ***Community Survey***

The Community Survey asked, "*What characteristics of Grafton would you like to see maintained?*" Responses clearly indicated a Town-wide concern with preserving natural, cultural and historical resources. (See **Chart 5-1**)

**Chart 5-1**



## Open Space:

### I. Natural Resources

#### A. Surface Waters

Surface waters consist of rivers, streams, brooks, lakes, ponds, and wetlands. They are important to the water supply, recreation opportunities, wildlife, and the appearance of the Town. See **Map 5-1**. All maps in this Element are taken from the 1992 *Open Space and Recreation Plan*.

Grafton's natural resources are extensive and varied. Significant bodies of water include the Quinsigamond and Blackstone Rivers, Lake Ripple, Silver Lake, Miscoe Brook, Axtell and the Big Bummet Brook stream corridor. For details concerning each of these water bodies, see the *Open Space and Recreation Plan*.

The 1997 *Natural Resources Inventory and Assessment* of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission (BRVNHCC) identified sixty-nine (69) high value natural resources in the River Valley. *Fisherville Mill and Pond* and *the Great Meadow* were the resources identified in Grafton.

#### *Fisherville Mill and Pond*

The 1997 *Natural Resources Inventory and Assessment* made the following recommendations for Fisherville Mill and Pond:

- Establish Fisherville Mill and Pond as a high priority site as it represents the convergence of several key goals of the Corridor: environmental remediation, historic preservation, economic development, and wildlife habitat restoration.
- Support the continued concerted efforts of the public and private actors so far involved and the potential recruitment of other parties: the property owner, the Army Corps of Engineers, the MA DEP and Fish and Wildlife, the Town of Grafton, the Central Massachusetts Economic Development Authority (CMEDA) and advocacy groups such as *Ducks Unlimited*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, *Natural Resources Inventory and Assessment*, September, 1997, page 27

The 1999 fire that destroyed the Fisherville Mill affects the recommendations made in the *Corridors Inventory and Assessment* in some ways, but it does not make them any less worthwhile. Fisherville Pond remains an extremely important environmental resource. When the area dam was opened in 1982, quite a bit of habitat was lost. Restoration is possible. Closing the dam would be ecologically beneficial to the region.

The fire has left a sizable open area along the Blackstone River that should be seen as a tremendous opportunity. Re-use options for the site include a public park, perhaps containing a monument to the Mill and the Fire. There is an opportunity to create a use for the Fisherville Mill site that preserves its history while maximizing natural resources of the location. The goals of the Corridor still remain, which are chiefly environmental remediation and habitat restoration.

## **B. Regionally Shared Surface Water Resources**

### Drainage Patterns

The quality of Grafton's surface waters is dependent on both the intensity and density of uses of land and the management of discharge within their drainage areas. Maintaining aesthetically pleasing waters that support fish and wildlife and recreational uses, such as swimming and fishing, is a function of cooperative land use policies among municipalities.<sup>3</sup>

The drainage patterns of surface water in Grafton are shown on **Map 5-1** on the next page. There are four major watersheds in the Town, with several smaller drainage areas contributing to each. The drainage areas are:

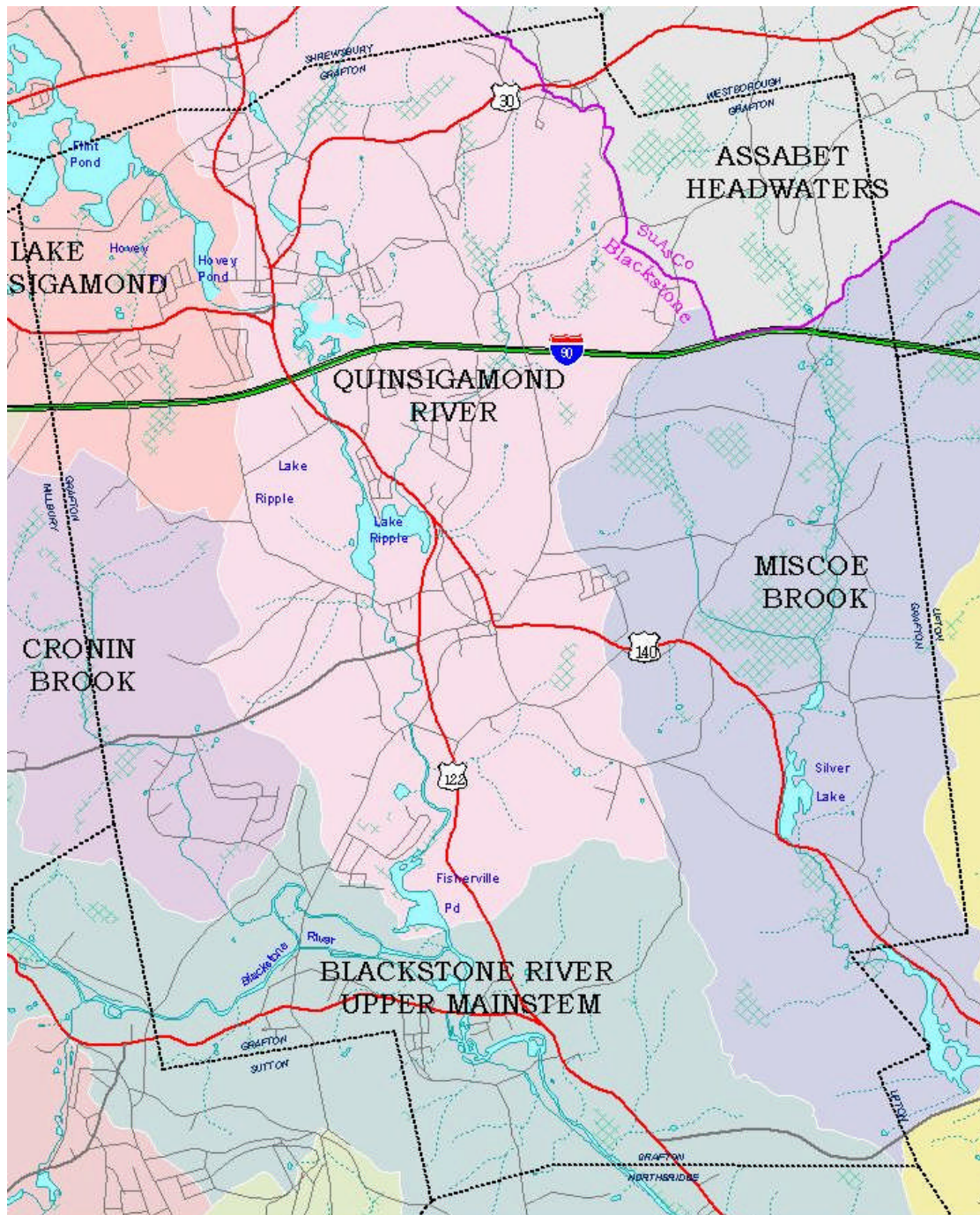
1. *The Quinsigamond River* drains Flint Pond, a portion of Lake Quinsigamond, and at various places it flows into Hovey Pond, Lake Ripple, and Fisherville Pond before discharging into the Blackstone River in the southern part of Town. Big Bummet Brook, Axtell Brook, and several smaller tributaries drain into the Quinsigamond River. The Blackstone River enters Grafton from Sutton in the southwest corner and flows through the heavily developed sections of Farnumsville and Fisherville.
2. *The West River watershed* is the second largest in area, draining through the relatively undeveloped portion of east Grafton.
3. *The Miscoe Brook* forms the headwaters of the West River, and flows through Cider Mill Pond and Silver Lake before crossing the Town line into Upton. The West River eventually enters the Blackstone River in Uxbridge.
4. In the northeast corner of Grafton lies a small portion of *the Assabet River*, which drains northward in an entirely different system.

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<sup>3</sup> 1999 *Open Space and Recreation Plan* final draft, Section 3, page 6

**Watershed And Drainage Areas In Grafton**

**Map 5-1**



**Table 5–1** shows watershed areas that are regional resources. They are only partially within Grafton's borders.

**Shared Watersheds**

**Table 5–1**

<i>Watershed Description</i>	<i>Towns Directly Contributing</i>	<i>Recipient Towns</i>	<i>Acreage in Grafton</i>
Quinsigamond River	Millbury, Shrewsbury, Worcester	Northbridge	7,848
Blackstone River	Millbury, Sutton		1,815
West River	Upton	Upton	3,266
Assabet River	Westborough	Westborough	988

*Source: Comprehensive Plan Report, Grafton, Massachusetts, Charles E. Downe, 1963*

Potentially threatening land uses, identified on the Northbridge, Sutton, and Shrewsbury borders, indicate the need for regional aquifer management strategies that operate in accord with the framework provided by *the Massachusetts Water Management Act*. Such strategies might include establishing an informal, ad hoc regional ground water management committee, or purchasing protective lots or easements in towns where land use could threaten nearby Grafton wells, or establishing a regional water district.

***Miscoe Brook Watershed***

Grafton's *Miscoe Brook Watershed* has recently<sup>4</sup> been designated as an 'Area of Critical Environmental Concern' (ACEC) in conjunction with the Warren Brook Watershed in Upton. The area of nomination, 8,700 acres, the 26<sup>th</sup> officially designated such state area, includes 220 acres of meadows, marshlands, forests, and farmlands, and is now known as "the Miscoe, Warren and Whitehall Watersheds Resource Area". The Great Meadows, consisting of "great cypress swamps and natural hay meadows"<sup>5</sup> is of tremendous ecological value to Grafton and to the region. The Town's purchase of and then minimal development of the Hennessy parcel will help to protect the area's integrity. The Town should pursue further land acquisition in the area.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Announced in the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*, July 20, 2000

<sup>5</sup> Excerpted from *A Nomination for an Area of Critical Environmental Concern: The Miscoe and Warren Brook Watersheds, Grafton and Upton*, October 14, 1999

<sup>6</sup> 1999 *Open Space and Recreation Plan* final draft, Section 3, page 6

### ***Great Meadows***

Underlying the bottomlands of the Blackstone River is the region's major aquifer, which Grafton shares most immediately with Shrewsbury, Millbury, Sutton, and Northbridge. Local groundwater quality is dependent on keeping the aquifer as free as possible from contamination. Increased drawdowns resulting from development in the region tend to concentrate the effects of the river's toxic sediments. These toxic sediments have been deposited throughout the Blackstone River's long industrial history, and pose a threat to the water supply. Some large commercial uses in Shrewsbury lie within *Zone 2* in Grafton's *Water Protection Overlay District*. Grafton needs to be concerned about controlling or prohibiting uses that could contaminate the underlying aquifer.<sup>7</sup>

### **C. The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor**

In 1986 Congress recognized the Blackstone River Valley, the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution in America, as a *National Heritage Corridor*. It is a unique regional historic landscape in which opportunities for recreation and cultural enrichment now abound for both residents and tourists. To fulfill the vision described in the Corridor Commission's *Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan* (1991), Grafton should continue steps to preserve its historic, cultural, and natural resources. The *Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor* section on Grafton is incorporated here by reference. The Report is on file with the Town Planning Board.

The results of the long history of industrial use of the Blackstone River have only begun to be addressed. As late as the mid-1960s, the river was considered a public nuisance. Efforts to clean up the river, protect its watershed, and create a continuous greenbelt along the Blackstone and Quinsigamond shores are Goals of the *Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission* and are being undertaken by the *Blackstone River Watershed Association* and the *Grafton Conservation Commission* with considerable success.

Continued pollution of the Blackstone River and physical blockage and water flow problems that occur due to its many dams have had a severe impact on aquatic life and habitat along the river and its tributaries. The presence of the dams has impeded efforts to reintroduce anadromous species to these waters. Eutrophication, caused by heavy development in the vicinity of the linked ponds along Big Bummet Brook has impaired that habitat and reduced the amount of aquatic life found there. A greenway established here would have major benefits.

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<sup>7</sup> For discussion in greater depth of water supply, acquifiers, and pumping stations, see Section 3 of the draft *1999 Open Space Plan*.



Such a greenway was first proposed in the *1963 Comprehensive Plan Report* for Grafton. Additionally, the Town should develop an education program to change commercial and homeowners' pesticide and herbicide practices, since overuse of these substances results in run off into rivers, streams, and ponds. The Town also should encourage proper maintenance of septic systems, since their nutrient-rich leachate promotes algae growth, upsetting the ecological balance necessary to aquatic life.

Under the *American Heritage Rivers Program*, the Blackstone River has qualified for federal funding and technical expertise from 13 federal agencies. The program is designed to link “clean-water projects, economic development and historic preservation”<sup>8</sup>.

**Table 5–3** presents suggestions for management of regional water-based and land-based resources.

### **Managing Regional Resources**

**Table 5–2**

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Towns Affected</b>	<b>Actual or Potential Value</b>	<b>Management Problem</b>	<b>Local Remedy</b>
<b>Blackstone River</b>	All towns within the Watershed	Regional recreation; Wildlife habitat and fisheries; Aesthetics	Pollution attributable to wastewater discharge and toxic sediments	Enact Erosion and Sedimentation by-law;  Enact Storm water Management Plan;  Protect land along banks
<b>Cronin Brook</b>	Millbury, Grafton	Fishing, Aquatic and wildlife habitat	Grafton portion of drainage area is scheduled for intense residential development	Require more stringent performance standards for impervious surfaces
<b>Big Bummet Brook and Associated Ponds</b>	Grafton, Shrewsbury	Wildlife habitat; Part of linked Brook Pond ecosystem; Fishing; Recreation	Pollution due to landfill leakage upstream;  Eutrophication from intense land use, septic system failure	Protect land along banks;  More stringent septic system placement standards;  Enact voluntary program to control phosphate use.
<b>Quinsigamond River</b>	Grafton, Shrewsbury, Worcester	Wildlife and Aquatic habitat; Aesthetics; Recreation	Increasing development within watershed	Protect land along banks  Restore Fisherville Marshes

<sup>8</sup> Worcester Telegram and Gazette, July 20, 1999

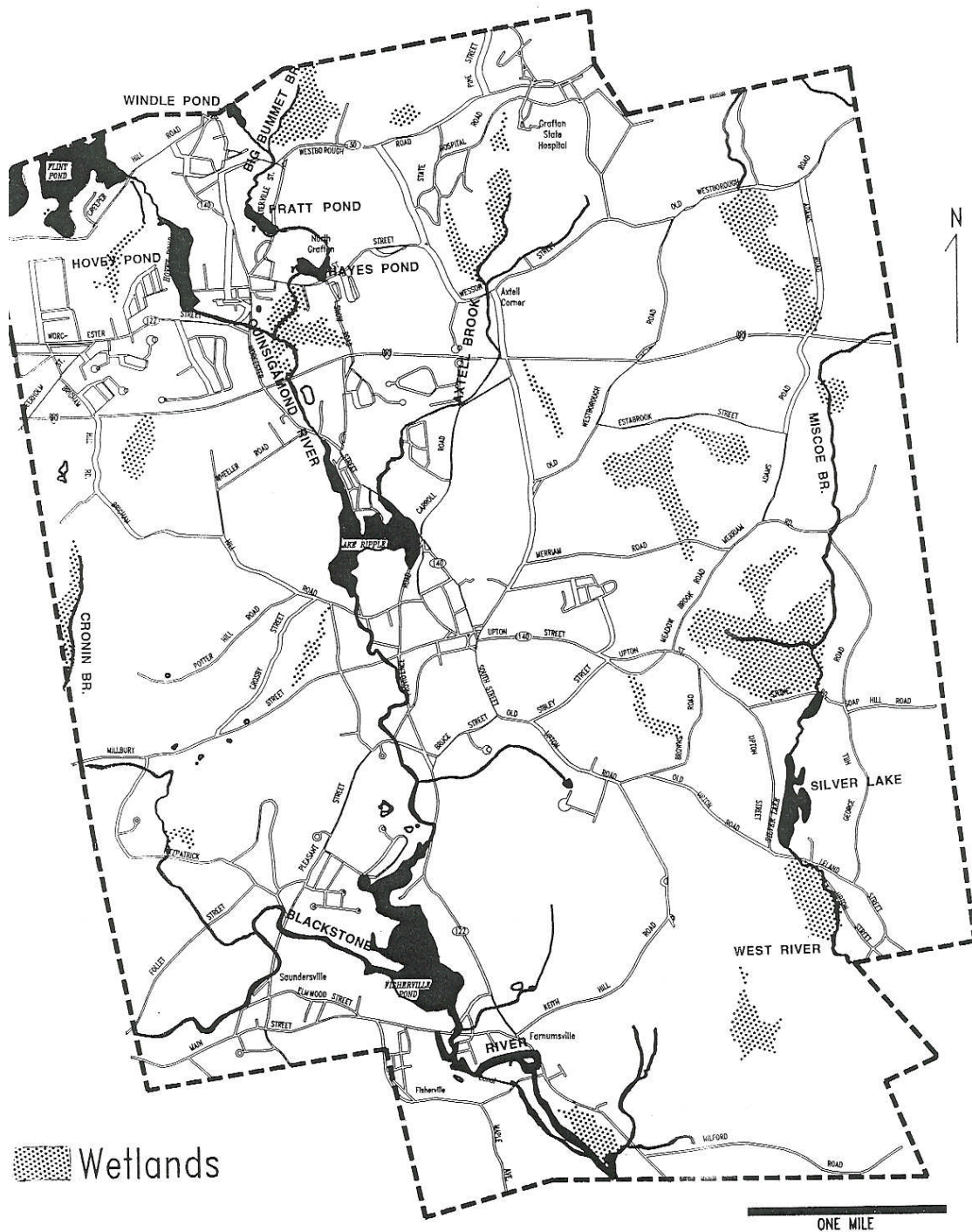
**Table 5–2, continued: Managing Regional Resources**

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Towns Affected</b>	<b>Actual or Potential Value</b>	<b>Management Problem</b>	<b>Local Remedy</b>
<b>Quinsigamond-Blackstone Aquifer</b>	Grafton, Shrewsbury, Millbury	Protection of drinking water supply	Increasing development; Danger from small leaking underground storage tanks	More stringent septic system placement standards; Monitor small tanks
<b>West River Aquifer</b>	Grafton, Upton	Ground water Protection	No immediate problem; Small underground storage tanks need control	Protect the Great Meadows; Monitor small tanks
<b>Miscoe Brook and Great Meadows</b>	Grafton	Regional Wildlife Refuge; Fishing; Hunting	Needs more protection than the Town can afford	Land acquisition; Pursue ACEC designation
<b>Flint Pond</b>	Grafton Shrewsbury, Worcester	Regional water recreation, particularly power boating; Fishing	Poor pond access in Grafton	Publicize major public access for motorboats that is in Shrewsbury, off Route 20
<b>Worcester - Providence Bikeway and Heritage Trail</b>	All towns within the Corridor	Regional transportation and recreation	Land acquisition; Inter-municipal planning needed	Seek easements; Seek land donations; Seek funding; Develop local management
<b>Blackstone Valley landscape</b>	All towns within the Corridor	Maintain historic character and scenic resources; Tourism	Growth	Develop Mill Village zoning, Seek 'scenic road' designation; Allow flexible lot sizes; Create local historic districts



## Surface Water Resources and Wetlands

Map 5-2



*Water Supply Protection Overlay District*

The Blackstone Basin has been substantially improved in recent years. To cope with the need for increased groundwater protection, Grafton adopted the *Water Supply Protection Overlay* (WSPO), following the recommendations of the 1988 *Aquifer Protection Study*. Because Grafton was originally a mill town, much of its industrial land is within the overlay district. As a result, the WSPO has many non-conforming uses. The WSPO Zone regulations substantially restrict industrial use, making it necessary for the Town to consider rezoning other land for industrial use. Within the Overlay Zone, certain uses are specifically prohibited; other uses such as motels and schools are allowed only if connected to public sewer. Uses likely to be less damaging, such as golf courses, may be allowed if granted a Special Permit by the Planning Board.

*Road runoff (salt), pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers*

Grafton, in common with every other town, needs to address these problems. The most effective way requires implementing *Best Management Practices* (BMPs) for storm water, including catchment basin cleaning as well as increased street sweeping. Road salt, particularly in the vicinity of aquifer recharge areas, is a threat to groundwater supplies. Lawn and garden maintenance and agricultural activities threaten both groundwater supplies and surface waters. A comprehensive education on safer garden practices and more ecologically sound alternatives should be pursued, in conjunction with toxic materials collection days. Collection data, location, and procedures are frequently the responsibility of the Board of Health or the Conservation Commission.

## **II. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments**

Grafton hosts many scenic landscapes, hills, vistas, and rural roads. The Planning Board has taken decisive action to protect these resources that help to make up Grafton's character. Regulations such as the *Scenic Road Bylaw* govern removal and alteration of trees and stone walls along designated roads, and design requirements in the *Rules and Regulations Governing Subdivision of Land*<sup>9</sup> require protection of natural resources. Appendix E lists "Special Places in Grafton.

Wildlife species have evolved over eons of time to utilize all available habitats. In a Town such as Grafton, increasing development not only threatens the total amount of open space but also truncates what remains into isolated patches, often too small to provide satisfactory habitat for food and water, breeding, and cover. In general, the larger the area of land, the larger the number of species that may be found in it, so preserving species diversity means preserving contiguous areas of upland and wetland habitats wherever possible. At the very least, wildlife migration corridors need to be preserved that connect the types of habitats required. See **Map 5-3** for rare and endangered plant and wildlife habitat areas.

The resources discussed in this Element include portions of those areas designated "Distinctive" or "Noteworthy" in the *Department of Environmental Management Scenic Landscape Inventor*, and those areas that are considered special places, landscapes, and views in Grafton. Preferences for inclusion have been elicited through Town surveys and group process techniques. Criteria for Landscape Inventory designation are listed in Appendix D.

### **Blackstone River Watershed**

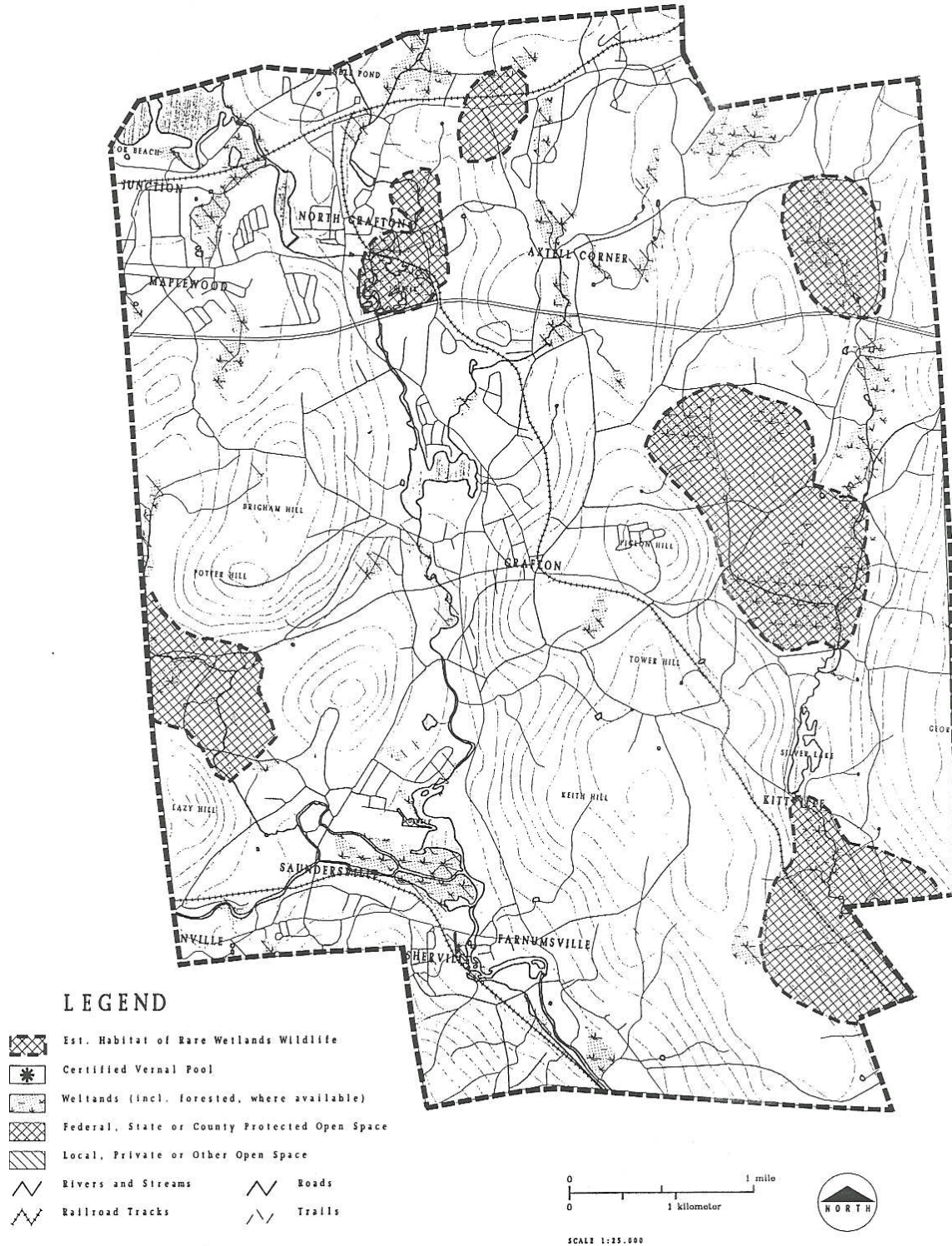
The Blackstone River Watershed Association is developing parcel-by-parcel identification and a prioritized strategy for protection, creating stream corridors that preserve both hydric and mesic habitats along the Quinsigamond and Blackstone Rivers. However, if measures are not taken to protect substantial acreage of upland habitat contiguous to the stream, pond, and riverbanks, many of the species currently found in Grafton will be lost. Therefore, it is important that Grafton conduct a wildlife corridor study.

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<sup>9</sup> *Rules and Regulations Governing Subdivision of Land of Grafton*, adopted by the Town, February 28, 1998

**Rare and Endangered Plant and Wildlife Habitats**

**Map 5-3**



### **The Great Meadow**

In its 1972 *regional Recreation Comprehensive Plan*, the *Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission* proposed the Great Meadow as a regional wildlife refuge, describing it as an 1,100 acre reserve “for preservation of wildlife habitat and low intensity recreation uses, such as fishing in the headwaters of the West River, nature study, limited hunting, hiking, and horseback riding along the edge of upland.” The report describes it as an area of good scenic quality and high water resource value for stream protection and preservation of extensive floodplains. Marshes are of high value as habitat for waterfowl. Even though the wetlands are protected under the local and state Wetlands Act, much of the abutting land, which provides important upland corridors for game, is not.

The waters of Silver Lake are protected by the Great Meadows, which include all the wetlands within the Miscoe Brook drainage of the West River watershed. The 1962 *Comprehensive Plan Report* recommended that this mosaic of wetland plant communities cited by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife as worthy of preservation in its natural state be protected.

### **Other Significant Natural Areas in Grafton**

#### Corridors of the Quinsigamond and Blackstone Rivers

Many residents indicate a desire for a trail system that follows along the banks and shores of these waters. The preservation and development of the Quinsigamond and Blackstone trail systems should take a high priority in the Town's recreation and conservation plan. Quinsigamond and Blackstone Rivers, the Town's most important natural resources, are today its most unique scenic and recreational resources.

#### Bummet Stream Corridor

An area that is not often mentioned but which is worthy of restoration is the Big Bummet stream corridor, including Windle, Pratt, and Hayes Ponds. Long-time residents speak of the days before the pond shores were built up and decry the present fouling of the stream ecosystem, a result of effluent leaking from septic tanks near by and from a landfill beyond Grafton's borders. The 1962 *Comprehensive Plan Report* called for a greenway and trail system along Big Bummet as part of the Town greenway system. This action is long overdue.



### **Scenic Roads**

In a further effort to protect Grafton's scenic resources, the Town has compiled a list of scenic roads for protection under the *Scenic Road By-law*. Those protected include

- Adams Road
- Brigham Hill Road (between Potter Hill Road and Deernholm Street)
- George Hill Road
- Keith Hill Road
- Meadowbrook Road
- Merriam Road
- Wesson Road
- Willard Road

### **Farmland**

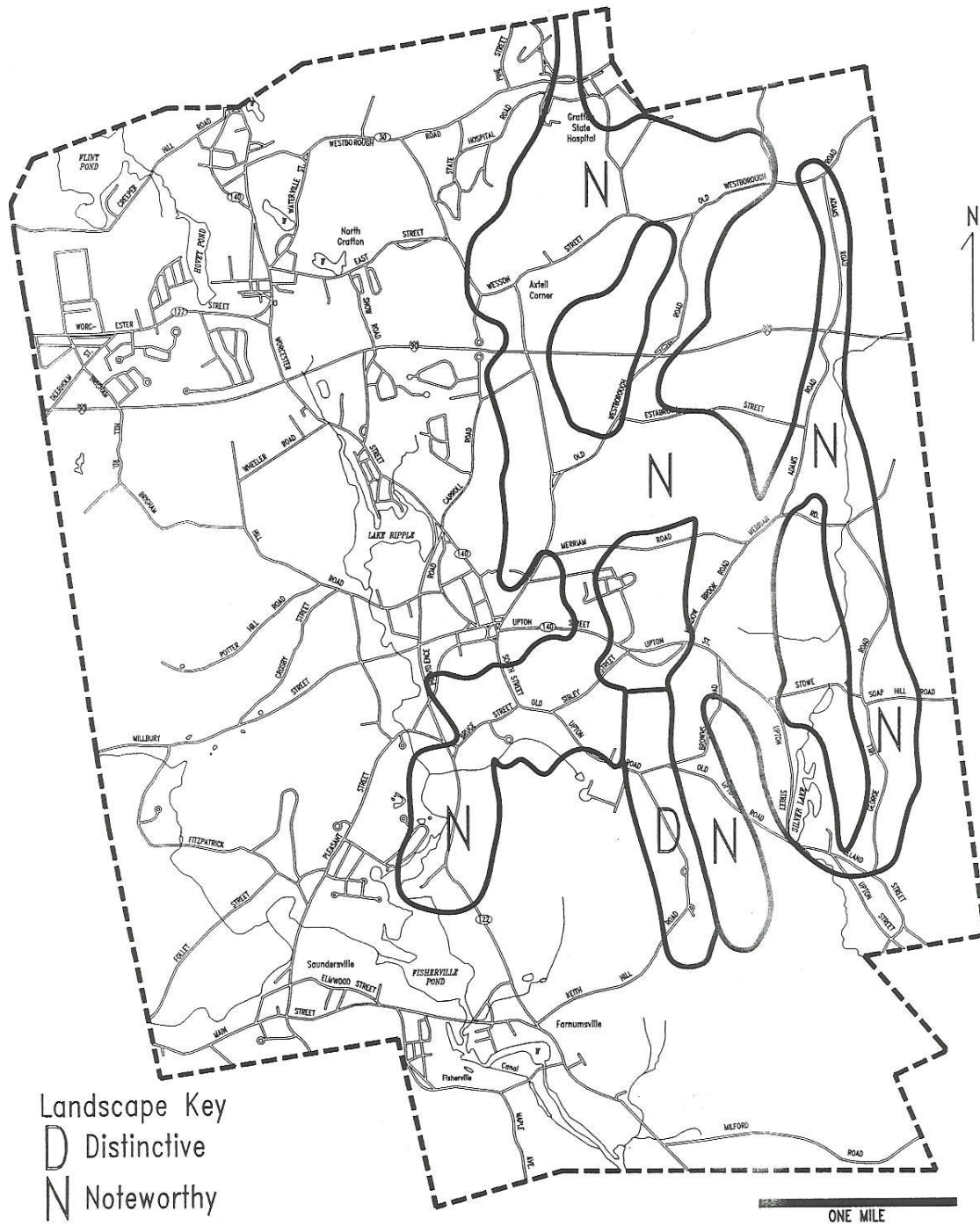
Consistently mentioned in the list of special places are the Knowlton and Adams farms, the Tufts land, the views from Brigham and Potter Hills, the aforementioned Keith Hill, and the views across the Fisherville Marshes to Lazy Hill. Much of the land in these areas has temporary *Chapter 61* protection, which provides the Town with an option to purchase the land should it become available for development. Only a relatively small amount of land, such as the Brigham Hill Wildlife Area and a portion of the Great Meadows is permanently protected.

While landowners increasingly have taken advantage of the tax breaks available for farmland, those programs offer no permanent protection. In order to protect rural and scenic character, and farmland and natural resources in Grafton, policies and programs must be developed and implemented which permanently protect remaining prime and significant farmlands from development.

It would be wise to seek a more permanent form of protection for areas where there are large tracts of farm and woodland acreage unbroken by roads. Examples include the 340 acres between Potter Hill and Brigham Hill, now in various categories of *Chapter 61*, and the significant tracts of farmland on both sides of Estabrook Street abutting the Town owned Merriam Woods area. It is unbroken expanses like these that characterize Grafton.

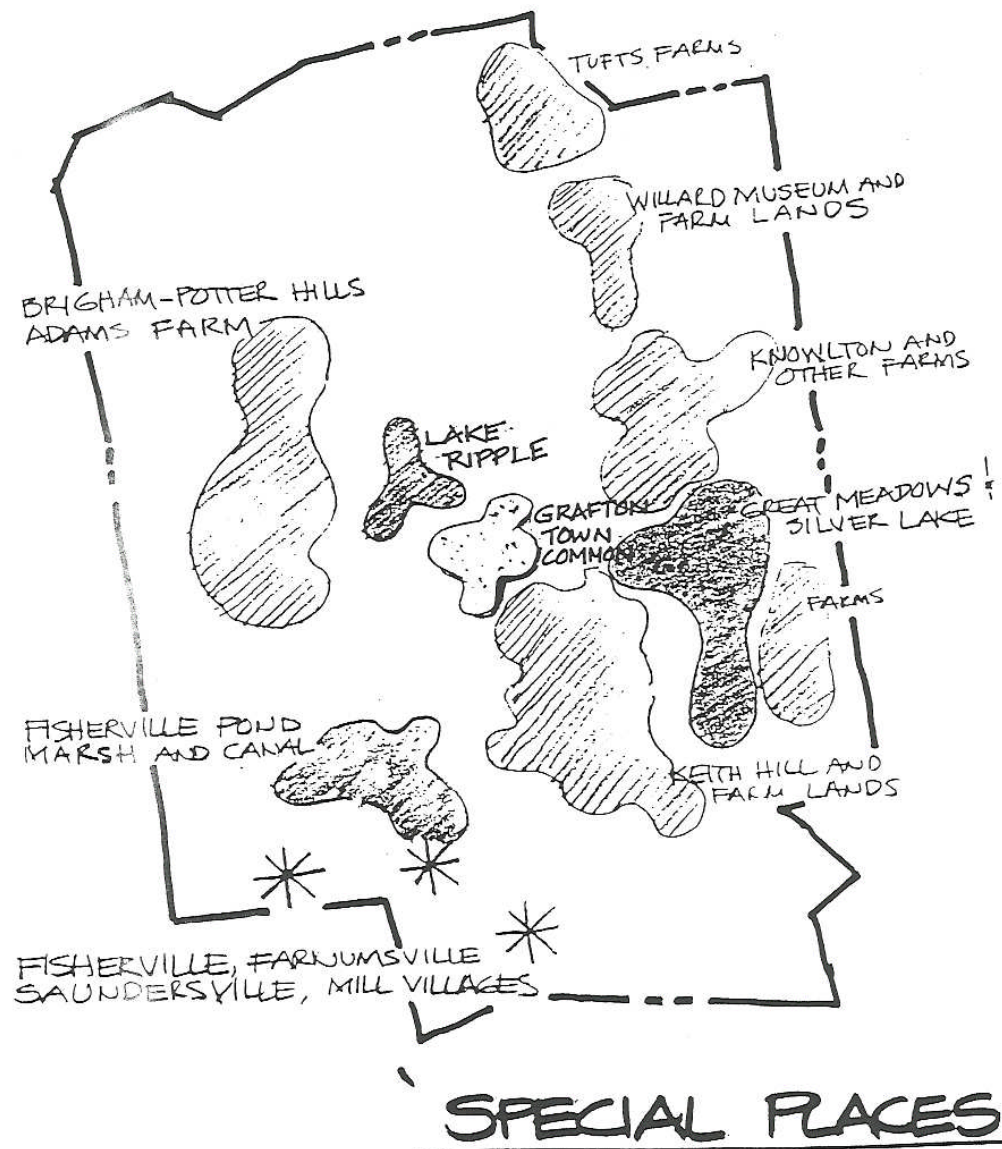
**Scenic Landscape Inventories in Grafton**

**Map 5-4**



### Special Places in Grafton

Map 5-5



SKETCH BY WALTER CUDNOHUFESKY



## Institutional Lands

Included in this category are institutional parcels whose grounds contribute to the open space and parkland in Town. Some of these grounds might serve as links in a trail system, protect natural resources, or provide scenic views. Most of the parcels have no permanent protection.

### INSTITUTIONAL LANDS

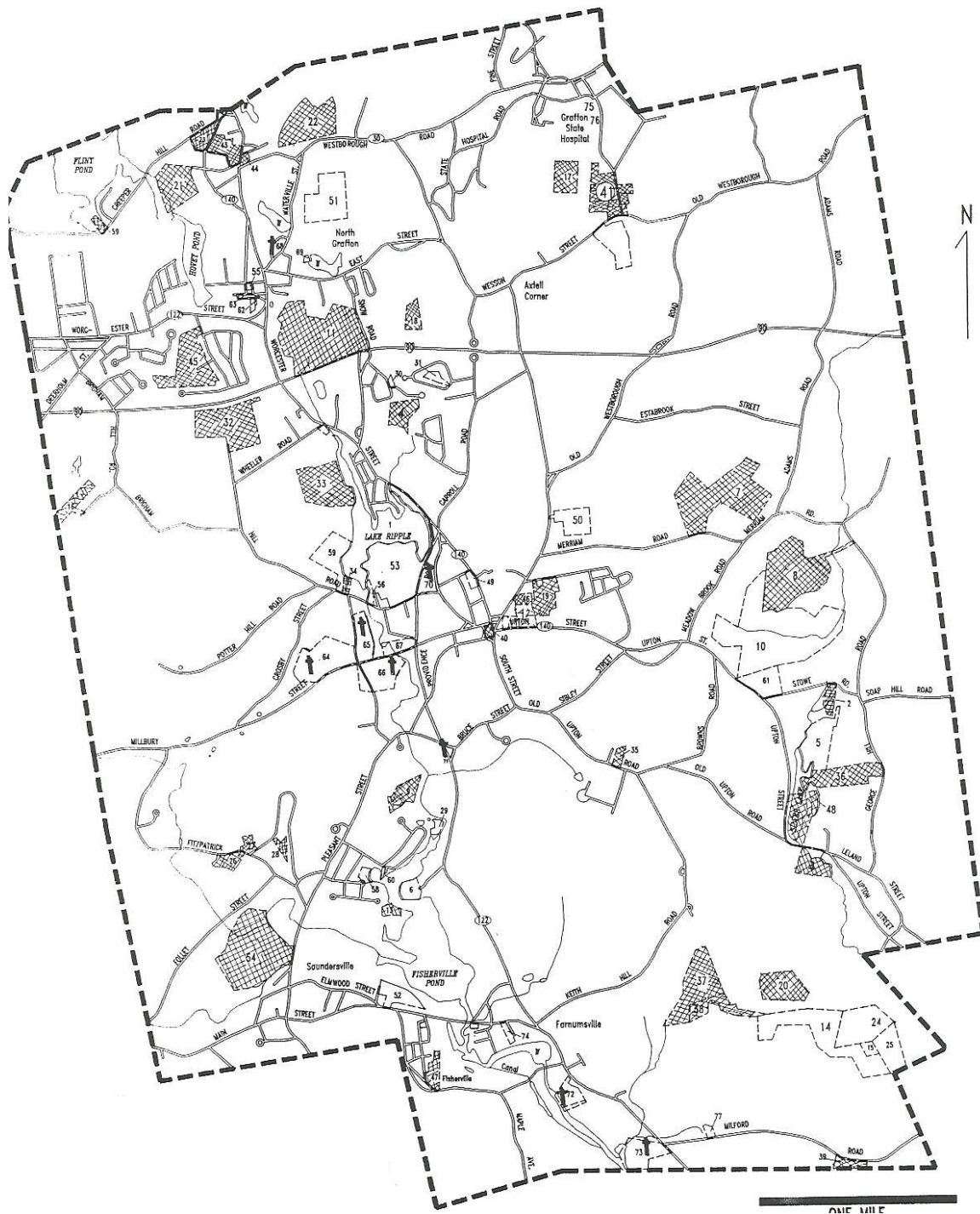
**Table 5–3**

<b>Name Location Owner</b>	<b>Acres Map Number</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Vegetation Unique Features Natural Resource Value</b>	<b>Recreation Potential</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
<b>St. Philip's Cemetery Hudson Street Worcester Diocese</b>	33.2  (#64)	R-40	Vegetated wetlands	Green belt trail system	St. Philip's Catholic Church	
<b>Riverside Cemetery expansion site; Stump dump Town</b>	21.3  (#66)	R-40	Borders Quinsigamond River	Part of Quinsigamon d green belt trail system	Board of Selectmen	Reserved for cemetery uses
<b>Grafton Water District</b>	2.8  (#67)	R-40	Wetlands; Quinsigamond frontage	Part of green belt/ trail system	Water Department	
<b>Pine Grove Cemetery Town</b>	40.5 6.7 (#68)		Hayes pond wetlands; Abuts Town land	Part of green belt/ trail system at Big Bummet	Cemetery Department	
<b>Hayes Pond parcel Town</b>	11,830 sq. ft. (#69)	R-20	Pond protection	Part of green belt along Big Bummet Brook	Board of Selectmen	

**Table 5–8, INSTITUTIONAL LANDS, continued**

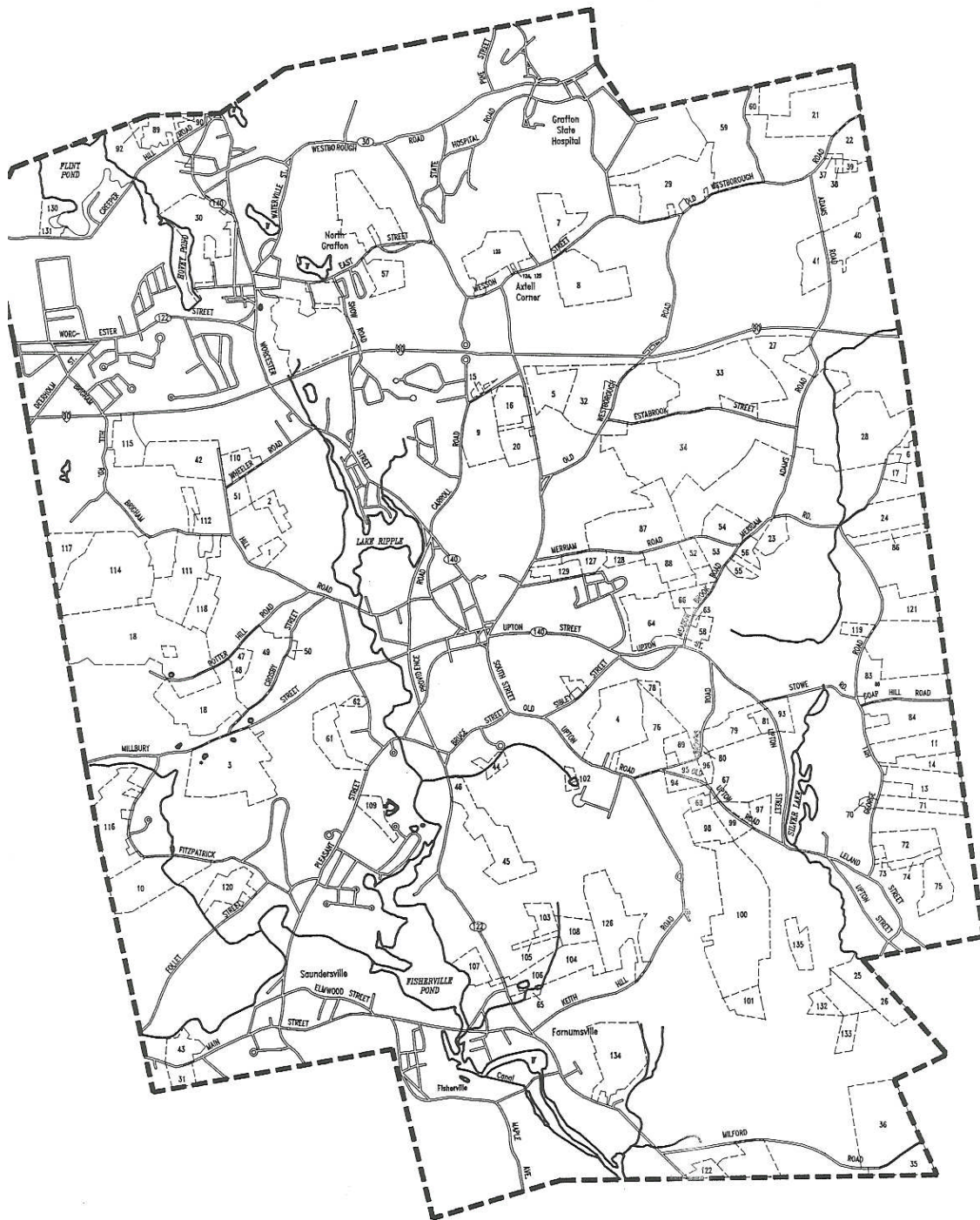
<b>Name Location Owner</b>	<b>Acres Map Number</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Vegetation Unique Features Natural Resource Value</b>	<b>Recreation Potential</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
Oak Street Cemetery Oak Street and Brigham Hill Road Town	4.0 (#70)	R-40	Old Burying Ground- Historic site	Interpretation	Historic Commission/ Cemetery Department	National Register potential
Bruce Hollow	.16 (#71)	RMF	Indian Burying Ground	Interpretation	Historic Commission/ Cemetery Department	National Register potential
Little Riverside Cemetery Town	8.1 (#72)	R-20	Borders Blackstone River	Part of green belt along Blackstone; BRVNHCC bikeway	Cemetery Department	
Fairview Cemetery Providence Road Town	17.0 (73)	R-20	Borders Blackstone River; Overlooks Blackstone Canal	Part of BRVNHCC Worcester-Providence bikeway route	Cemetery Department	
Council on Aging / South Grafton Main Street Town	2.0 (#74)	NB	Borders Blackstone River	Pocket park for the elderly	South Grafton Community House	CR potential
Grafton State Hospital	122 (#75)	OLI	Extensive wetland	Part of trail system	Conservation Commission	CR potential
Grafton State Hospital	100 (#76)	OLI/ R-40	Historic properties	Trails	DCPO	National Register potential
Tufts Veterinary School of Medicine	400 (76)	OLI	Scenic	Part of trail system	Tufts University	National Register potential
Town Dump	2.9 (#77)	?	Adjacent to site of archeological interest	Beginning of greenbelt trail along Blackstone River		

### Map 5-6



## PRIVATE OPEN SPACE IN GRAFTON

Map 5-7



### **III. Development Pressure in Grafton**

Development activity in Grafton has created a consensus, judging from responses to the 1999 Community Survey, that protection of the character of the Town, its natural and historic resources, scenic beauty, and farmland are critical physical planning issues. The development activity of the 1980s encouraged the Town to rethink its zoning. The Town has responded to development pressures with various actions, which are listed below. Grafton has:

1. Imposed a moratorium on multi-family development while it prepared a new zoning Bylaw (1986)
2. Prepared a comprehensive overhaul of the Zoning Bylaws (1986)
3. Passed a Scenic Road Bylaw, which governs the removal and alteration of trees and stone walls along designated roads (1987)
4. Passed a Wetlands Protection Bylaw, providing for 100-foot buffers around local wetlands (1988)
5. Adopted the recommendations of the 1988 Aquifer Protection Study concerning changes in the Rules and Regulations Governing Subdivision (1988)
6. Adopted a Water Supply Protection Overlay Zone, (1989), and enlarged it by amendment (1991)
7. Established zoning regulations for the Water Supply Protection Overlay Zone (1991)
8. Adopted a Flexible Development Amendment to the Zoning Bylaw, to preserve a minimum of 40 percent of open space in any development of over 5 units (1991)
9. Developed Design Guidelines Manual to “encourage environmentally and culturally responsible site changes within Town” (1991)
10. Established National Register Village Districts for Farnumsville and Fisherville (1995)
11. Been identified as part of a regional Economic Target Area (1995) and established Economic Opportunity Areas.

The Town is presently considering actions such as mill-village zoning to protect its historic resources. It is reviewing mandatory cluster zoning, transfer of development rights, and zoning provisions. It is also reviewing innovative zoning regulations to protect views along its roads and scenic uplands.

### **Protection of Open Space**

Much open space is now in one and two acre zoning which, ironically, tends to be destructive of distinctive rural character and instead produces the monotonous look that typifies many suburbs. To try to combat these patterns, the Town adopted a flexible development amendment to the Zoning Bylaw that allows homes to be clustered on smaller lots while preserving the remaining acreage as open space.

Particular care with development must be taken in the Miscoe Brook area. This section of Town contains large areas of very deep and buildable soils, much of it prime and significant farmland. Furthermore, it is underlain by a major aquifer, and is not served by the municipal sewer system. Even non-intensive residential development in this region poses a threat to the ground water resources and to the complex ecosystem of the Great Meadows.

Another area meriting attention is in the northeast portion of Town, surrounding and below the Grafton State Hospital. The Town has used the area to develop an industrial park, not yet occupied, but designed to protect the scenic area.

Land acquisition through purchase has become a less viable option because of the high cost of land. Because of this, Grafton pursuing ownership (through tax title) of properties that have long been abandoned, and is encouraging donations of fee simple and/or partial development rights to critical lands through conservation restrictions and easements.

The Town is pursuing other non-regulatory methods of protecting its landscape and Town character, such as developing advisory design guidelines for new and renovated development<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Town of Grafton *Design Guidelines Manual*, 1991



## **Recreation:**

### **Recreational Uses of Rivers, Ponds, and Brooks**

**Table 5–3, Table 5–4, Table 5–5, and Table 5–6** that follow describe actual and potential recreational uses for the water bodies of Grafton. All are classified as “Class B” waters, designated as "habitat for fish, other aquatic life, and wildlife, and for primary and secondary contact recreation". The designations refer to purposes, not necessarily achievements.

#### **Water Bodies of the Quinsigamond River Watershed**

**Table 5–4**

<i><b>Water Body</b></i>	<i><b>Existing Uses</b></i>	<i><b>Potential Uses</b></i>	<i><b>Limitations</b></i>
Flint Pond*	Recreation on the Worcester side; Fishing:	Motor boating, fishing	Parking access and boat launch needs to be developed
Hovey Pond	Fishing, hunting	Boating, fishing	Access needs to be developed for parking and handicapped users
Big Bummet Brook	Fishing, hunting	Part of green belt trail system	Eutrophication has destroyed aquatic habitat
Windle Pond	Fishing, hunting	Green belt & trails; fishing	Further development
Pratt Pond	Private		
Hayes Pond	Fishing, hunting		Town owns land along shore; access is through Town cemetery
Axtell Brook	Town is acquiring land to protect waters; fishing, hunting	Green belt and trails	Shallow during summer
Quinsigamond River	Canoeing; fishing, hunting	Greenway trails, fishing	
Lake Ripple (Goddard Pond)		Canoeing, fishing; Green belt & trails	Dredging in process; 2.5 acre site for parking, boat ramp, picnic areas are not developed
Fisherville Pond	Fishing	Boating	

\* Flint Pond is the only natural great pond in Grafton. Originally 78 acres, it has been impounded to its present size.

**Recreation Sites In The Blackstone River Watershed**

**Table 5-5**

<b><i>Water Body</i></b>	<b><i>Existing Uses</i></b>	<b><i>Potential Uses</i></b>	<b><i>Limitations</i></b>
Quinsigamond River	(See above)		
Cronin Brook	Trout fishing, Hunting	Greenbelt & trails	Development pressures
Farnumsville Pond			
Blackstone River	Canoeing, Picnicking along banks; Fishing	Part of Heritage Park	Portages studied but not developed; Park needs state funding
Blackstone Canal	Interpretive site at Leland's Landing		Waiting for state funding

**Recreation Sites In The West River Watershed**

**Table 5-6**

<b><i>Water Body</i></b>	<b><i>Existing Uses</i></b>	<b><i>Potential Uses</i></b>	<b><i>Limitations</i></b>
Miscoe Brook (head waters of West River)	Trout fishing	Hunting, Fishing; Municipal well site	Development pressures
Tributary below Estabrook Avenue	Fishing, hunting		
Cider Mill Pond	Fishing		Lack of parking access
Silver Lake (Kitville Pond)	Town beach, Swimming, Boating		Parking limited, access on Rte 140 is dangerous; Impacts of development
West River	Fishing, hunting	Fishing	Development pressures

**Recreation Site In The Assabet River Watershed**

**Table 5-7**

<b><i>Water Body</i></b>	<b><i>Existing Uses</i></b>	<b><i>Potential Uses</i></b>	<b><i>Limitations</i></b>
Assabet River	Fishing, hunting	Greenway trails, Fishing	



### *Lake Ripple*

Lake Ripple, once called “the Town's most glamorous lake, attractive for ice skating, fishing, boating”, remains a favorite scenic spot but at present is not living up to its potential. A study conducted in 1986 identified sediment deposition and weed growth problems in the lake, and recommended the dredging of sediment and periodic ‘hydro-raking’ of weeds to restore the lake to a state of high water quality.

A long-standing plan calls for the rehabilitation of Lake Ripple after the dredging program is completed, with boathouse, boat and canoe launches, picnic area and parking lot. While additional swimming facilities at Lake Ripple are no longer contemplated, expansion of its present capacity would provide all residents with a desirable water-based recreation area.

### *Other Recreation Areas*

Recreation areas, totaling 273.3 acres, either have existing facilities or are suitable for development as park or recreational facilities. They are open to the public but are not necessarily under public agency ownership or management; neither are the land or its uses necessarily protected. Lands managed by the Recreation Commission need an Act of State Legislature to be developed for non-recreational purposes.

**Table 5–8** beginning on the following page, lists existing Park and Recreation Areas.

### *Publicity for Recreation Areas*

Many Town residents do not know what recreation facilities are available. Efforts are being made to publicize names and locations through increased signage and the use of the newspaper. Land and facilities improvements should also be publicized. If the Town is spending the money to rehabilitate areas, people should know about it. This not only spreads the word about positive developments, but also helps to build a constituency for these facilities, which is the most important ingredient in assuring successful outcomes in budget deliberations. The introduction of a “Discovery Day” and the printing of a “Discovery Map” would help residents remain informed about recreation facilities and the opportunities Grafton offers.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Recommendation from 1999 *Open Space Plan* draft, Section 7, page 20

**EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION AREAS**

**Table 5–8**

<b>Name Location Owner</b>	<b>Acres and Map Number</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>State of Site</b>	<b>Limiting Factors: Expansion Capability</b>	<b>Potential Use</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
Town Common  Grafton Center	3.0 (#40)	NB	Bandstand, Benches	Excellent	Heavy traffic		Historic District Commission	Perpetuity
Willard House & Museum  Corner Willard and Wesson Streets  Town	42.7 (#41)	R-40	Historic house; Clock Museum; Barn; Caretaker's cottage; Pasture; Hayfield	NA	Maintain eighteenth century environment	Camping, Picnicking	Willard House and Clock Museum, Inc.	Charter protects use
Tree Barn and Town Highway Building  Upton Street  Town	6.5 (#42)	R-40	Tree department equipment; Highway Department equipment; Historic Bank	NA	Abuts Chestnut St Forest and Norcross Park; possible site for parking lot on Rte 140	X-country Ski Trails;  Town Trails	Highway Department  Tree Warden GHS	None
Nelson Park  Prentice and Elm/ Rte 140  Town	10.1 (#43)	R-20	2 ball fields; 1 basketball net; Play area; Swings; Horse; Jungle bars	Very good	Has been upgraded	Additional ball fields	Nelson Trustees	Perpetuity
Nelson Park  Windle Avenue  Town	1.2 (#44)	R-20	Trees in area	NA	Proximity to railroad		Nelson Trustees	Perpetuity

**Table 5–8, EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION AREAS, continued**

<b>Name, Location, Owner</b>	<b>Acres/ Map Number</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>State of Site</b>	<b>Limiting Factors: Expansion Capability</b>	<b>Potential Use</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
Airport Park  Airport Road- Bedford Drive  Town	5.6  28.0  (#45)	R-20	2 ball fields; 1 basketball net; Play area; Jungle gym, Swings, Slide, 2 Picnic Tables	Fair	Field, Courts being upgraded; Lack of bleachers, & benches; Lights need repair; Poor drainage	Picnicking, Trails	Recreation Commission  Conservation Commission	Perpetuity
Norcross Park  North Street  Town	4.3  (#46)	R-40	1 ball field; 1 basketball net; Play Area; Swings, Slide, Climbing Bar, 2 Picnic tables	Good	Lack of bleachers; Poor drainage; Lights, Court upgraded	Abuts the 21 acre Chestnut Street Forest/ Trails; Additional Ball field; New Swings	Recreation Commission.	Perpetuity
Fisher Park  Ferry Street  Town	11.2  (#47)	R-20	3 ball fields; 1 tennis court; Lighted basketball court; 3 bleachers; Play Area; See-Saw, Climbing bar	Fair	Tennis, basketball courts needs repair; Lack of parking, Lack of bleachers; Vandalism	Additional basketball court;  Sandbox	Recreation Commission and Fisher Park Commission	Perpetuity
Silver Lake & adjacent beach  Upton Street  Town	19.4  (#48)	A	Town beach; swimming, boating, canoeing	Very good	Lack of parking; Access on Rte 140 is dangerous; Vandalism	With adjacent Town lands, picnicking, trails; no horse riding	Conservation Commission  Recreation Commission	Perpetuity

**Table 5–8, EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION AREAS, continued**

<b>Name, Location, Owner</b>	<b>Acres/ Map Number</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>State of Site</b>	<b>Limiting Factors: Expansion Capability</b>	<b>Potential Use</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
Norcross Annex  Town	2.3  (#49)	R-20	Field	Good	Rte 140 location; Needs regular maintenance	Any future municipal use	Board of Selectmen	None
Grafton Middle School  Waterville Street  Town	15.3  (50)	R-40	1 Soccer field 2 Ball fields Play area Swings, Slide, Climbing bar	Fair	Lack of parking	Additional soccer and ball fields	School Committee	Dependent on school use
Norcross Annex  Town	2.3  (#49)	R-20	Field	Good	Rte 140 location; Needs regular maintenance	Any future municipal use	Board of Selectmen	None
North Grafton School  Waterville Street  Town	20.4  (#51)	R-20	1 Ball field 1 Basketball court Play area; Swings, Climbing bar	Good		Green belt/ trail along Big Bummet Brook & pond system	School Committee	Dependent on school use
South Grafton School  Main Street  Town	8.3  (#52)	R-20	2 Ball fields Play area; Swings and Slide	Good	Lack of parking	Possible access to Blackston e Canal & River across Railroad tracks	School Committee	Dependent on school use

**Table 5–8, EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION AREAS, continued**

<b>Name, Location, Owner</b>	<b>Acres/ Map Number</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>State of Site</b>	<b>Limiting Factors: Expansion Capability</b>	<b>Potential Use</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
Senior High Complex  Providence Road  Town	46.5  (#53)	R-40	<i>Fields:</i> 1 Soccer 1 Varsity Football 1 Practice Football 1 Field Hockey 1 Softball 1 Baseball 1 Track 4 Tennis courts 1 Little League field Bleachers	Very good			School Committee	Dependent on school use
Practical Arts Building Sr. High Complex Town	Included in above parcel (#53)		4 Tennis courts 2 Basketball nets Play area, Swings	Fair	Tennis courts need repair		School Committee	Dependent on school usage
Super Park	Included in above parcel (#53)		Children's Play Area	Very good	Size of parcel	Continue as play area	Super Park, Inc.	Recreation Easement
Old Gravel Pit  Follette St.  Town	53.0  (#54)	R-40	None  Park design completed		Part of linear park system; Regional bicycle trail along Blackstone	Regional park; Municipal well field	Board of Selectmen  Conservation Commission	State CR; Article 97
Old Perry Hill School  Town	1.1  (#55)	R-20	1 Basketball net Play area, Partial swing set	Fair	Blacktop needs work; Swing set needs repair; Lack of parking	Perry and High Streets access	Recreation Commission	?

**Table 5–8, EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION AREAS, continued**

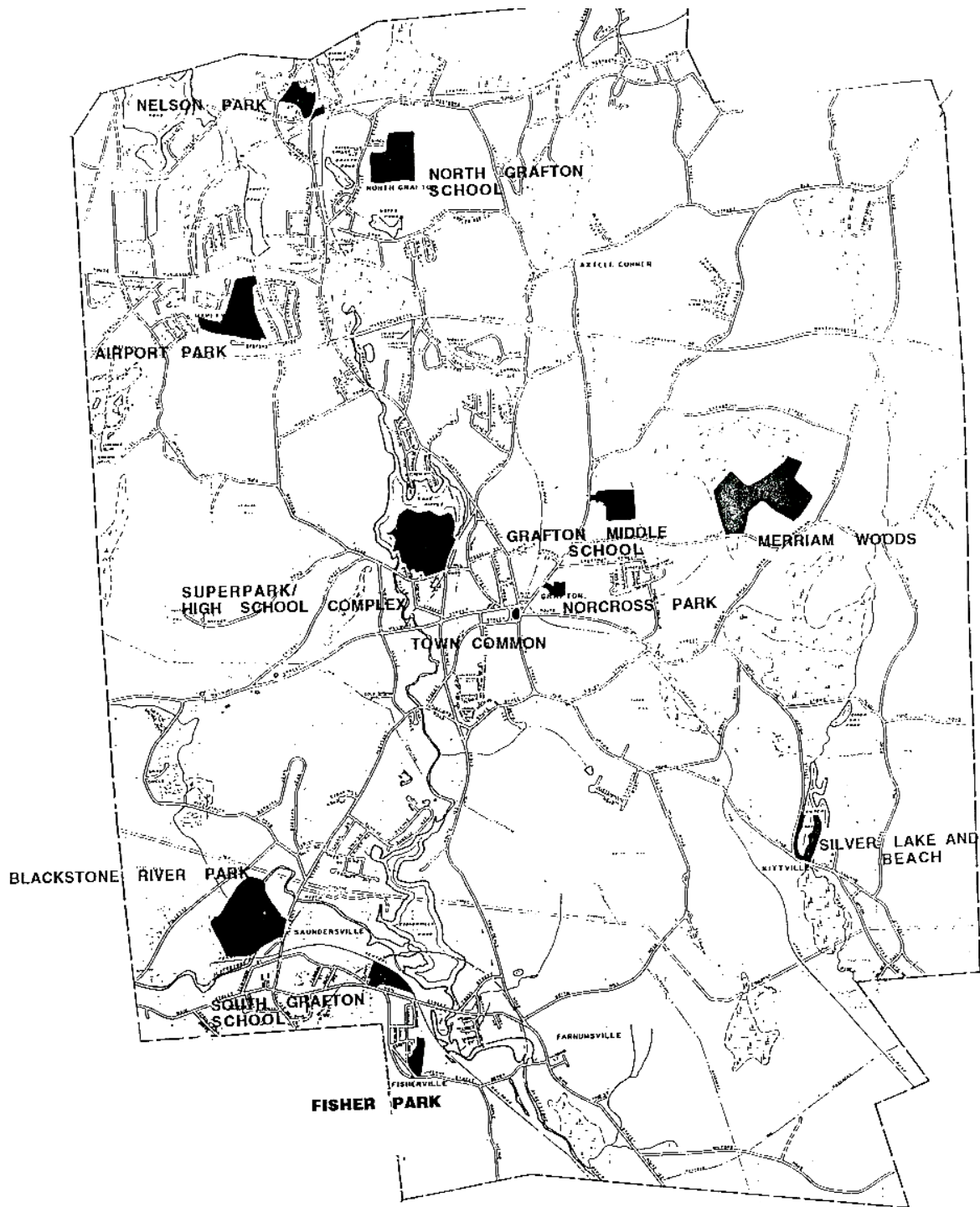
<b>Name, Location, Owner</b>	<b>Acres/ Map Number</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>State of Site</b>	<b>Limiting Factors: Expansion Capability</b>	<b>Potential Use</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
Gatehouse Dam Lake Ripple Brigham Hill Road  Town  Rita Martin Conservation Area	2.5  (#56)	R-40		Good	Funding needed for lake's cleaning & dredging;  Funding needed for facility's construction;  Need for gravel;  Need for access to parking area	Boat launch, Beach, Playground Picnic grounds with parking	Conservation Commission	Pursue recreation easement
Lion's Club Land  Brigham Hill Road  Lion's Club of Grafton	14.1  (#57)	R-40	Building for children's summer recreation activities;  Former swimming area			Green belt trail system along Lake Ripple	Lion's Club	None
Spanish River Rd. Land/ on Fisherville Pond/ Town	3.97  (#58)	R-20	Open field		Neighborhood opposition	Access through Powerline Road	Board of Selectmen	Floodplain zone
Unnamed Parcel  Creeper Hill Road  Town	1.0  (#59)	R-20	None	NA	Access from Creeper Hill	Good boat launch for Flint Pond	Conservation Commission	Local CR
Unnamed parcel off Sunrise Drive Town	0.54  (#60)	R-20	None	NA	Neighborhood property dispute	Boat launch for Fisherville Pond	Board of Selectmen	None

**Table 5-8, EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION AREAS, continued**

<b>Name, Location, Owner</b>	<b>Acres/ Map Number</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>State of Site</b>	<b>Limiting Factors: Expansion Capability</b>	<b>Potential Use</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Degree of Protection</b>
North Grafton Fish & Game Club Upton Street Snow Rd.	28.0  (#61)	A	Rifle range	Good	Wetlands and Soils		North Grafton Fish and Game Club	None
Whitney Park Mill Street Town	0.95  (#62)	R-20	Mill Court of New England Village	Good	Neighborhood Park		Board of Selectmen	None
Volunteer Fire Station   Town	0.7  (#63)	R-20		NA	Size of lot and state of repair of historic facility		Board of Selectmen	None

## RECREATION SITES IN GRAFTON

Map 5-8





#### **IV. Cultural Resources**

Grafton residents are fortunate to have access to many outstanding cultural opportunities of other communities, in addition to the churches, libraries and clubs in Town. Some of these cultural facilities include:

- Famous historic sites in Massachusetts (Boston, Lexington, and Concord).
- Museums and theaters in the Boston area and Worcester
- Colleges, educational institutions, churches and hospitals in eastern Massachusetts, many of which are world famous. The colleges and medical facilities of Worcester are readily accessible.
- Library services and specialized libraries of many colleges in the region augment the Town libraries. These require cooperation.

##### *A. Cultural Facilities and Events*

The *Grafton Cultural Council* is responsible for distributing State money earmarked for cultural uses. In 1998 the Grafton Council received \$7,500 from the State for which there were 20 applications. The Council is limited in the number of projects that it can financially support. Most of the money goes to school and library events, although some has been provided to individual artists. The Council encourages diversity. The School Department has successfully varied programs funded by the Council while keeping them consistent with the curriculum. In recent years the library has made resident passes available to a number of museums.

The Grafton Town Common is frequently used for cultural programs. The *Cultural Council and the Recreation Commission* work together to provide summer ‘Concerts on the Common’, and hope residents will benefit from continued access to the Common and surrounding buildings (chiefly the library and Unitarian church) that can provide both indoor and outdoor activities, such as Art Shows. In 1999 the Cultural Council conducted a resident survey, which documented that citizens want to see continued and even increased activities on the Common.

There are three public library buildings in Grafton: the Nelson Memorial Library in North Grafton, the Main Library on the Common, and the South Grafton Branch. The Library Trustees and the ‘Friends of the Library’ work together to provide numerous activities for citizens of all ages, ranging from swing dances to Easter Egg hunts. For a detailed look at the libraries and issues relative to services, spaces, and staffing, see *Community Services and Facilities* Element.

*The Grafton Senior Center as a Cultural Resource*

The Grafton Senior Center is a valuable multi-purpose resource for seniors. It is maintained by the Council on Aging and provides a site for gathering and for recreational activities. The Center is having space problems and needs expanding; for example, it lacks physical training facilities. It is also in need of repairs. For further discussion of the Senior Center, see the *Public Facilities Element*, page 13.

#### **IV. Grafton History**

Grafton, with its meadows, good farmlands, and abundant waterways, has been historically a site of settlement. Originally called 'Hassanamesit', it became the third of Reverend John Elliot's 'praying Indian' towns and served as a center for missionary activities in central Massachusetts until the outbreak of King Philip's War. As the remnant Indians' fortunes continued to dwindle in the war's aftermath, white settlers purchased most of the land from the Hassanamisco band of the Nipmuc tribe, and incorporated Grafton as a Town on April 18, 1735. Only a three-acre tract, the Hassanamisco Reservation on Brigham Hill Road, remains in Indian ownership.

Early colonists farmed, but with increasing use of the Blackstone River's waterpower for manufacturing, the Town developed as an industrial center. Ethan Allen began manufacturing of firearms, pocket cutlery, and the "pepperbox" revolver in 1832. There was also a small amount of shoe manufacturing by 1843. Many mills thrived during the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth, but few were able to make a comeback once stricken by the Depression in the early twentieth century. By 1960, there were only 17 manufacturing firms in the Town, compared to 72 in 1922.

##### **A. Historical and Archeological Resources**

A comprehensive listing of Grafton's archeological resources and historical buildings and landscapes can be found in *A Survey of Historic and Cultural Resources of the Town of Grafton*, by Anne Forbes, on file with the Grafton Planning Board and Grafton Historical Commission.

The Department of Environmental Management, in its 1982 *Massachusetts Landscape Inventory: A Survey of the Commonwealth's Scenic Areas* designated more areas "Noteworthy" and "Distinctive" in Grafton than in any other Town in south-central Massachusetts.

*Blackstone River Canal and Heritage State Park*

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is developing the Blackstone River Canal and Heritage State Park, with an interpretive site in South Grafton at Leland's Landing.

*Grafton Common Historic District*

The Grafton Common Historic District is under the jurisdiction of the Grafton Common Historical District Commission, which regulates the appearance of all structures on Common.

***B. Historic Buildings and Lands***

In addition to the Town Common, Grafton boasts three distinctive historic villages that contribute to Town character and culture. Fisherville and Farnumsville were established as National Register Village Districts in 1995. These villages are each noteworthy in architecture and history. Each possesses integrity of design, location, setting, materials, and workmanship, as well as the development as small industrial villages functioning around a single mill. Of the four National Register Criteria, the villages each met two; “associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.” They embody “distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess “high artistic values”, or represent “a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction”. Grafton Center is also worthy of (and should be considered for) such designation, as it meets the same criteria.<sup>12</sup> The Town received a grant to fund completion of a Tree Inventory to record the ‘historic landscape.’ and this has been completed. Attention to preserving identified valuable trees should be a Town priority.

*Historic Structures*

The Grafton Middle School History Club designed a *Grafton Center Walking Tour* brochure in [date]. The brochure notes the historic buildings located in the Town Center, including Grafton’s oldest house, now at 39 Worcester Street, dated approximately to 1720, the only example of an early 18<sup>th</sup> century gambrel-roof style home. The Solomon Prentice House, 20 Oak Street, is one of the Town’s few remaining intact five bay, 2 ½ story farmhouses. It was the home of Grafton’s first minister Reverend Solomon Prentice, who was a follower of the English preacher Whitefield. His radical Evangelical philosophy led to his dismissal in 1747.

*Three churches* in the Center are the Evangelical Congregational Church (1833), with clocks in the steeple and gallery made by the Willard family (see page 36), the Baptist Church (1830), the Unitarian Church (reconstructed 1862 following a fire).

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<sup>12</sup> *National Register Application Manual*, published by the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, Massachusetts Historical Commission, pages 3 and 4.

*Pre-industrial period buildings* around the Center include the Jeremiah Bond house at 17<sup>th</sup> South Street, one of only two 3-story Early Federal style houses in Grafton, the A.J. Hall Early Federal house at 28 North Street (c.1790). Other houses include Wheeler Block (1806), the Wood family double house at 30 North Street, the 1 ½ story “Cape Cod cottage” style (rare to Grafton) Hall house (1822) at 16 Millbury Street, the Grafton Inn, the 1830’s former schoolhouse at 6 Worcester Street, the 5-bay Greek Revival Flagg house at 1 North Street, the 5-bay Greek Revival Phillip Wing house at 12 Oak Street, (early 1830’s) the 1830’s Doge shop at 3 North Street, the Clapp house in high-style Greek Revival style (1832) at 44 North Street, and the Redding Farm house at 18 Oak Street.

*Industrial period buildings* (late 19<sup>th</sup> century) include the Greek Revival style George Estabrook house (1860), the Warren Building (1863), the Greek Revivals at 6 and 13 South Street, believed to incorporate the one story house of Samuel Wood, the Italianate style Nichols house (1875), the Queen Anne style Beauregard house (1890) at 26 Millbury Street, and the Sears Roebuck catalog house at 15 North Street.

In 1955, a bandstand was built for the film “Ah, Wilderness!” A similar structure stood on the site during the 1800’s.

For a more detailed examination of Grafton’s historical buildings and resources, see the 1991 *Survey of Historical Resources of the Town of Grafton*, conducted by Anne Forbes, for the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

#### *Willard House and Clock Museum*

The Willard House and Clock Museum homestead was built in 1718 as the two-room home of Joseph and Martha Willard. The Willards were the first permanent white settlers of a small Indian settlement called Hassanamisco. The Town of Grafton was established in 1735, with Joseph as one of the town’s original 40 proprietors. In 1766, four of the Joseph’s grandsons (Benjamin, Simon, Ephraim and Aaron Willard) began making clocks in their newly opened Grafton workshop, and they soon became recognized as America’s premiere 18<sup>th</sup> century clock making family. Although the original clock manufactory in Grafton closed in 1800, three generations of Willard clockmakers continued work in Roxbury and Boston, producing approximately 7,500 clocks by the time the business ended in 1870.

The museum opened in 1971 to preserve the historic Willard home and workshop and to serve as a repository for Willard clocks and Willard family belongings. Today, the Willard House is protected by 52 acres of open fields, wetlands and forestland. The museum has grown to include 10

period rooms and galleries. It features 75 Willard clocks displayed with 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century furnishings, and Willard family portraits and heirlooms along with notable collections of pewter, rugs, early American firearms, period costumes, Indian artifacts, and antique children's toys and dolls. Future plans for the compound include renovation of the barn into a Visitor's Center where the history of the Willard family, the Town of Grafton, and the Blackstone Valley will be interpreted for visitors.

#### *State Police Museum*

A Massachusetts State Police Museum and Learning Center (MSPLC) is currently under review by the state legislature, planned for the site of the current state police barracks in Grafton.<sup>13</sup> The state police "have a long history and a good story to tell"<sup>14</sup> Formed in the 1860s, the Massachusetts State Police are the oldest such police organization in the United States. Troopers at first lived in local barracks and patrolled the rural towns of Central Massachusetts on horseback, since the group was created in part to enforce child labor laws in the Blackstone Valley's textile mills. In 1875 the first state police detective branch the opened, and in 1921 the first 'uniformed' branch began.

#### *Additional Historical Resources*

Over the last three years, the Historical Commission has been working to re-erect markers at the old Oak Street Burial Ground, laid out in 1737. The ongoing "Raise the Stones" campaign has helped restore the integrity of the burial ground in the face of near-by development, vandalism and aging.

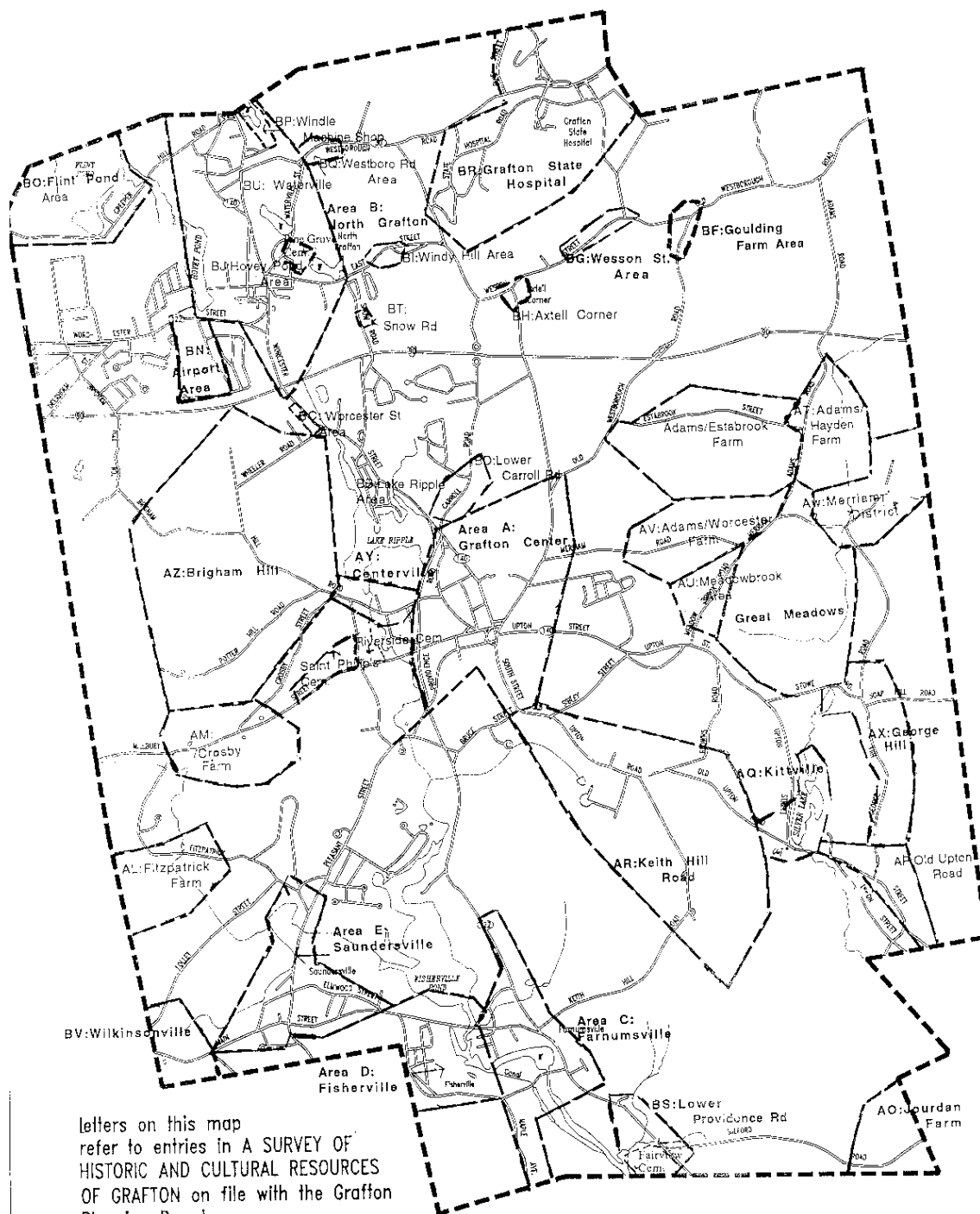
The Grafton Common Historic District Commission submitted documents to enable the Town to be recognized as a "Certified Local Government" in 1993. However, these documents need to be updated annually and, if Grafton does not do so, it will be in danger of losing its certified status. The documents were renewed in 1999. Certification increases the possibility of the Town receiving Federal and State funds for survey and planning studies.

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<sup>13</sup> As described in the *Worcester Telegram and Gazette*, August 11, 2000, written by Dan De Leo.

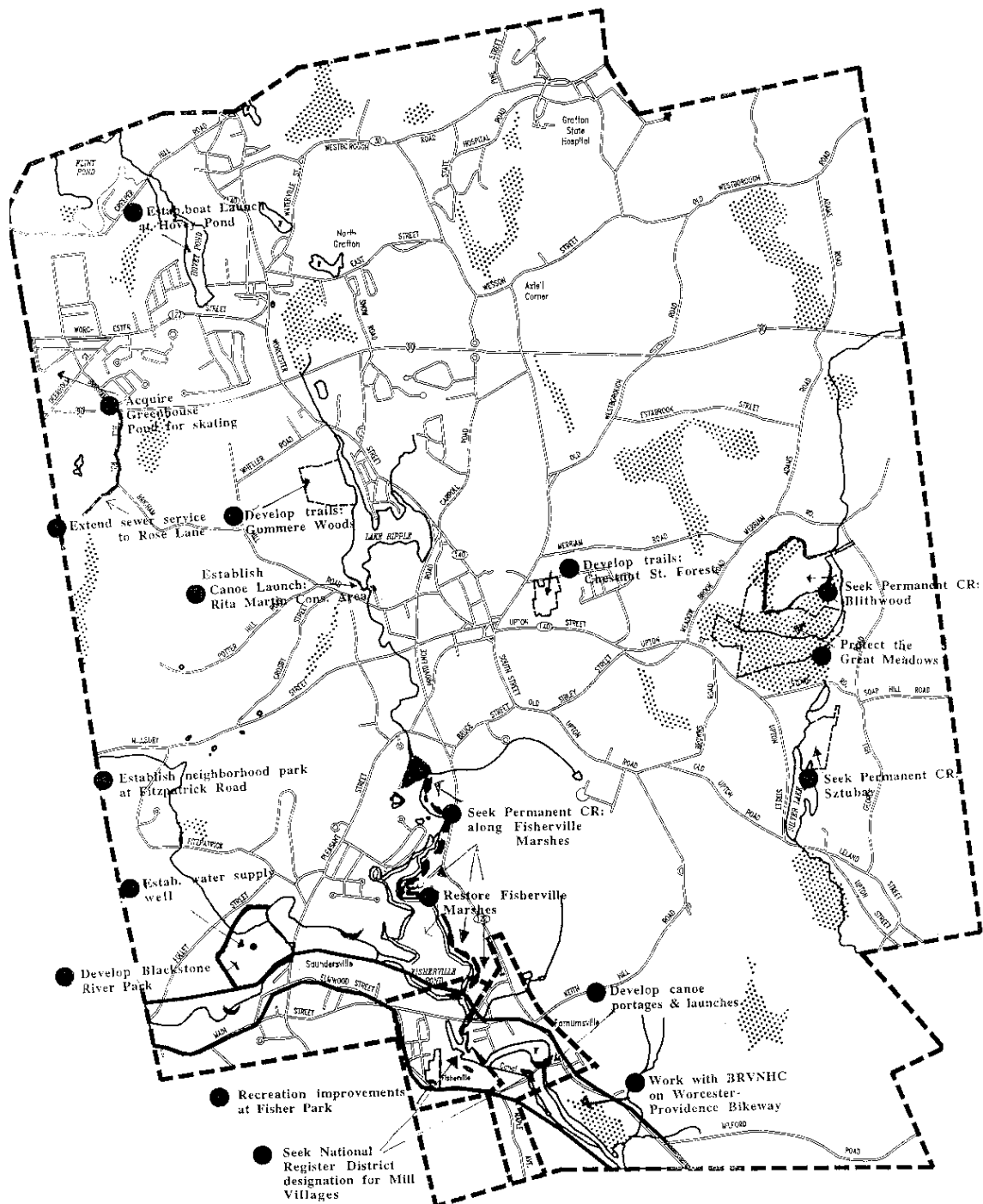
<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

### Map 5-9



**1992 Open Space And Recreation Plan Action Map**

**Map 5-10**



## **Recommendations**

The following actions are recommended for the Town.

### *I. Recommendations Relating to Open Space and Recreation*

Implement the 1999 Open Space and Recreation Plan, and its five-year action plan. The *Summary of Goals and Policies for Open Space and Recreation* is included in this Element. Some of these are cited below:

- Pursue historic designation for New England Village.
- Maintain Massachusetts Historical Commission designation as a Certified Local Government.
- Expand the Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land to include consideration of hilltop conservation, view lines and unique natural areas. Allow.
- Consider Mill-Village zoning to protect its historic resources.
- Review mandatory cluster zoning, transfer of development rights, zoning provisions, and 'flexible lot' sizes.
- Consider zoning to control development of the Mill Village area.
- Cooperate with the development of the Worcester-to-Providence Bikeway. Seek easements, land donations, funding, and local management for the Bikeway and the Heritage Trail.
- Establish an informal, ad hoc regional ground water management committee that might recommend purchase of protective lots or of obtaining easements in towns where land use could threaten nearby wells, or establish a regional water district, or recommend controls for regional commercial land use that might contaminate the underlying aquifer in Zone 2 of the *Water Protection Overlay District*.
- Adopt more stringent septic system placement standards.
- Enact Erosion and Sedimentation by-law
- Enact Storm water Management Plan
- Monitor small underground storage tanks
- Require more stringent performance standards for impervious surfaces, to protect drainage for areas such as those affecting Cronin Brook.
- Encourage proper maintenance of septic systems.



- Develop an education program to change commercial and homeowners' pesticide and herbicide practices, since overuse of these substances results in run off into rivers, streams, and ponds. Enact voluntary program to control phosphate use.
- Rehabilitate of Lake Ripple after the dredging program is completed, adding a boathouse, boat and canoe launches, picnic area, and parking lot.
- Publicize Grafton's "special places" in a newsletter or in the local paper, and pursue public education strategies to increase knowledge of local historic resources.
- Publicize land and facilities improvements in the newspaper. If the Town is spending the money to rehabilitate areas, people should know about it.
- Publicize the major public access for motorboats that is in Shrewsbury, off Route 20.
- Institute "Discover Grafton Day".
- Print a "Discovery Map" to help residents be informed about the recreation facilities Grafton offers, and the history of the Town.
- Activate a Trails Committee. Work with relevant organizations to develop a map of existing trails as well as proposed routes and destinations.
- Pursue further land acquisition or easements in the Hennessy area.

*II. Recommendations Relating to the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission:*

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission supports the policies and recommended actions proposed in *Municipal and/or Open Space and Recreation Plans*, which are to implement policies to preserve water and land use resources, protect significant wetlands, develop parkland, extend trails and preserve town character through comprehensive planning.

The recommendations for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission that appear on the following page are the BRVNHCC Natural Resources Inventory and Assessment recommendations for Sub-region 2 (Milbury/Grafton):

- Coordinate and assist communities in the Route 146 corridor to manage land use issues associated with growth, which include the new interchange, new employment centers, increased land demand for different uses, stressed water resources and loss of traditional landscapes.
- Continue to pursue the designation of “Area of Critical Concern” for the Miscoe Brook Watershed (now known as the Miscoe, Warren and Whitehall Watersheds Resource Area”.
- Conduct a wildlife corridor study.
- Promote the Technical Assistance Program of the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Work to establish a greenway and trail system along the linked ponds of Big Bummet Brook as part of the Town greenway system This was first recommended as part of the *1962 Comprehensive Plan Report*
- Support the Grafton Land Trust in its efforts to protect land around the Grafton Common, which will preserve natural resources as well as enhance a landmark setting for cultural resources.
- Evaluate closing the dam so the Fisherville Pond and marshes could be restored.

*III. Recommendations Relating to the Town’s Cultural, and Historical Resources:*

- Develop a long-range plan for the Fisherville Mill site in order to preserve the area’s history while maximizing the natural resources of the location.
- Develop a public park on the Fisherville Mill site. The park might include a monument or plaque commemorating the Mill, the Town’s industrial development, and the fire. Additional uses could be determined.
- Create local historic districts.
- Seek “scenic road” designations.
- Publish a “Welcome to Grafton” booklet informing new residents and visitors of the cultural and recreational opportunities available in Grafton, the Town’s natural resources, social and civic opportunities, and its history.

- Increase cooperation among the Cultural Council, Recreation Commission and non-profit organizations such as the Lion's Club and American Legion to provide events and activities, including recreational opportunities.
- Encourage development school curriculum focusing on local history and the presentation of programs about Grafton's history.

### ***Conclusion***

Attention to the natural, cultural and historical resources and related recommended actions and activities will help Grafton reach its Vision and achieve its Goals, and will assure preservation of the Town's heritage and character.

## **GRAFTON OPEN SPACE, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Table 5-9**

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>PHASE</b>			<b>GOAL SATISFACTION</b>
	<b>One</b>	<b>Two</b>	<b>Three</b>	
Maintain Massachusetts Historical Commission designation as a "Certified Local Government"	●			Preserve resources Advance goals Increase civic pride
Pursue a historic designation of "New England Village" for the Town	●			Preserve Town character Preserve the Villages Encourage Tourism (Economic Goal)
Pursue historic designation for Farnumsville and Fishersville villages	●			Preserve Villages Preserve Town character
Evaluate preservation status of all parcels and evaluate tax status of all parcels.		●		Preserve natural resources
Pursue enactment of a mill village mix use amendment to the zoning by-law	●	●		Preserve Town character
Place permanent conservation restrictions (CR's) on those town properties that are not protected.		●		Permanently protect natural resources
Secure permanent conservation restrictions on all properties that have 30-year protection at present.		●		Permanently protect natural resources
Evaluate existing tax title properties and where appropriate, seek to place under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission.		●		Permanently protect natural resources
Evaluate by-laws, regulations, and tax policies for stronger provisions to preserve and conserve open spaces and historic features and to protect significant farmlands.	●			Permanently protect natural resources Preserve Town character

**Table 5–9, continued: Recommendations**

RECOMMENDATIONS	PHASE			JUSTIFICATIONS
	One	Two	Three	
Expand the <i>Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land</i> to include hilltop conservation, view lines and unique natural areas.			●	Permanently protect natural resources Preserve Town character
Amend subdivision regulations so that they require retention of open space for wildlife corridors on all parcels located between or adjacent to open space (currently optional through “Flexible zoning”)			●	Protect natural resources
Encourage protection of large parcels of undeveloped land through donation of easements, conservation restrictions, or fee simple interests.	●	●	●	Protect natural resources
Establish a Land Bank with tax title lands, gifts, or other conveyances		●		Preserve Town character
Evaluate adoption of Development Rights transfers	●			Preserve Town character
Create a fund for acquisition of Chapter 61 lands as they become available	●			Preserve Town character
Develop local Agricultural Preservation Deed Restriction program based on waiver of subdivision regulations on a portion of the acreage in exchange for permanent restriction on the remainder (see Zoning bylaw: “Flexible Zoning”)		●		Preserve Town character
Seek easements to protect "special places"	●	●	●	Preserve Town character
Designate additional scenic roads	●			Preserve Town character

**Table 5–9**, continued: Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS	PHASE			JUSTIFICATIONS
	One	Two	Three	
Adopt regulations for rural roads and sidewalks	●			Preserve Town character
Pursue land use regulations such as scenic upland zoning to protect landscape resources		●		Preserve Town character
Develop zoning that will protect hillsides and views of the Blackstone and Quinsigamond Rivers		●		Preserve Town character
Cooperate with development of State Police Museum	●			Increase civic pride



# 6

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **Introduction**

This Element assesses Grafton's community facilities and services, in order to determine their present day adequacies and abilities to meet future physical needs for the general government, police, fire, schools, public works, cemetery, water, sewer/waste water facilities, library, Senior Center, recreation, and conservation in the Town. Discussions of public streets, open space and recreational areas are found in the Comprehensive Plan Elements entitled *Circulation* (Element 8) and *Natural and Cultural Resources* (Element 6) and the *Open Space/Recreation* (Element 5).

### **Importance of Public Facilities and Public Facility Planning**

Public facilities are, in many ways, the public face of the Town. How and where they are built, how well they meet needs of the Town and its residents, and how these public facilities are used and maintained affect how the Town views itself and how others see it.

Adequate planning for needs of the Town's current and future residents and businesses will allow the Town to provide superior service as well as reduce overall costs, compared to unplanned facilities that must be enlarged or upgraded later to meet changes in demand. To assure the benefits of superior service, new facilities must be built, and both the new and existing facilities must be well staffed and maintained.

The *Public Facilities* Element of the *Comprehensive Plan* identifies for the Town its current and future physical facilities needs. It also recommends for these facilities their locations and character that will meet the Town Goals and Vision. Under Grafton's current zoning, the size of development lots in the agricultural district is determined by availability of public sewer. Thus locations of public utilities can also reinforce the Town's zoning plan by helping control the location and timing of increased densities. The location of public buildings and facilities also has impact on not only the quality of the services they provide, but in addition reinforces other Elements of the Plan by making areas near-by more or less attractive for specific land uses.

*Public Facilities Planning* begins with basic needs of the current population and then takes into account the needs generated by population growth and change,



other Elements of the Comprehensive Plan, and the impact the facilities will have on the Town's future development.

### *Historical Perspective*

Grafton's 1963 *Comprehensive Plan* prepared by Charles Downe provides a perspective on the Town's public facilities but does not contain a separate chapter on them as this Comprehensive Plan does. Public facilities are discussed in the various chapters entitled 'Schools', 'Water', 'Sewerage and Drainage', and 'Capital Budget'. Since 1963, Grafton's population has grown and its composition has changed; consequently, levels of services have been increased. During this period Grafton has added schools, water and sewer infrastructure and other public facilities, though they do not yet meet all of the needs of 2000.

### **Goals and Policies**

Public facilities and public services are the most direct ways in which the Government of the Town impacts the lives of residents and its businesses. Planning for buildings and other facilities that provide these services is crucial to achieving the Goals of the Town, its Mission, and to ultimately reaching the Town's Vision. The Mission Statement declares "*Our Mission is to preserve our community's most impressive characteristics by...providing public services and facilities that offer multiple options for and reach into all aspects of the lives of all of our residents while maintaining fiscal stability.*"<sup>1</sup>

### **Community Survey Results Relating to Public Facilities**

The *Grafton Comprehensive Plan Survey* contained several questions related to public facilities and services. While there were substantial comments on the quality of services, there were relatively few comments on the need for new facilities. There were 442 responses.

- 33.5% (148 responses) thought additional areas of Grafton should be sewerred.
- 3.6% (16 responses) indicated a desire for more space and/or facilities for the schools.
- 2% (9 responses) requested a Teen Center.
- 1.8% (8 responses) wanted better facilities for the elderly. (See "Additional Cultural Resources, p.35, *Resources* Element)
- 1.8% (8 responses) wanted more library space.
- 0.2% (1 response) thought the Town needs a larger fire station.

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<sup>1</sup> For the complete *Mission* Statement, refer to the *Introduction* section of the Grafton Comprehensive Plan, page 19.

## **Major Public Facilities Issues facing Grafton**

Public facilities and services have been the subject of considerable study in recent years. Details of these studies<sup>2</sup> are not repeated in this Comprehensive Plan, but major issues and recommendations are identified. In addition to long term planning issues, Grafton is facing several public facilities issues that must be resolved in the near future. Most important among these are:

1. The construction and occupancy of the new school on Millbury Street, and its impact on the existing school use.
2. The related decision of constructing a new government center, thereby consolidating most central government activities and freeing additional school space.
3. The kind of new or expanded facilities desired to house police and fire departments, including considering the possibility of combining police/fire/emergency services within a single building, and where to locate such a facility.
4. What to do about the high cost of staffing, supplying and maintaining Grafton's three library buildings.
5. Developing a Municipal Center south of Grafton Center, as recommended in the land use Element of this Plan.

### *Additional Issues Identified*

Interviews were conducted with members of all the Town Boards, Commissions and Committees in addition to the Visioning process and the Survey. Based on the information obtained from all three efforts, the following Grafton Public Facilities and Services issues were identified.

## **I. Issues of General Government**

### **A. Need for Municipal Center**

Town Offices serve several functions for public service, including economic and even cultural. Public buildings are expensive to build and to maintain, so decisions must be made carefully when determining building locations. The Town Offices are currently housed in a large portion of the former middle school. Last year the School Department informed the Town that it needed either a new school building or the return of all of the former school building now used as Town Offices.

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<sup>2</sup> These include *School Studies*, *Public Safety Studies* and *Public Works Studies*.

Town Meeting considered construction of a new school building in January. On January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2000 the Town voted by a margin of 82 votes to allocate funds for the construction of a new Elementary School.

#### **Need for Municipal Center —Issues**

Given the decision by the Town to construct a new elementary school, the relocation of the Municipal Offices is not urgent, but will become an issue as the number of students in the junior high continues to grow. As the population of elementary school-aged students reaches the junior high school level, rooms now occupied by Town Offices may be needed for classrooms. It would benefit the Town, therefore, to implement a long-range plan to find a new space for the Town Offices.

Three options are available:

1. Lease or purchase an existing building and convert it into Town Offices
2. Build new Town Offices
3. Build a new *Municipal Center* with a public safety facility initially, and later incorporate other Town uses in the structure.

Regardless of the option or options selected, Town Offices should have a new location, both to provide more space and because the traffic and visitors associated with Town Offices is not an appropriate fit for a school location. The impact of location on the function of Town Government and on the structure and economy of the Town must also be considered. The question of the location for a new Municipal Center is discussed in the *Land-Use* Element of this report.

The location of Town Offices is important for practical reasons. This location should be easily accessible, even to those without private automobiles, since no public transit is available. Its location should not add to traffic congestion, and it should not appear to favor one area of Grafton over others. If possible, the location should encourage appropriate economic growth.

#### **Need for Municipal Center —Recommendations**

- The Town should acquire land for a new Municipal Center as recommended in the *Land Use* Element.
- The Town should begin planning for both the Municipal Center and a program for moving services there.

## **B. Control of Public Buildings — Issues**

The departments and agencies providing public services and facilities to the people and businesses of Grafton use municipal buildings to house and protect their staffs and equipment. Grafton does not have clear, consistent policies regarding ownership and control of public buildings.

- Some service agencies control their own buildings and properties while others do not control the assets they utilize.
- Building maintenance and protection from theft and encroachment are issues for many departments.
- Access and suitable levels of maintenance are common problems.

## **Control of Public Buildings —Recommendations**

- Assign each property (except where prohibited) to the department that is its primary user, OR
- Establish a property management office to maintain and repair all Town buildings.
- Develop a Municipal Center on land south of Grafton Center, as recommended in the land use section.
- Establish clear and consistent operating, maintenance and security procedures that apply to each/all facilities.

## **Public Facilities**

### **I. Public Safety Departments**

Planning for Public Safety Departments depends upon reaching a decision about whether or not the Town should consolidate all public safety services headquarters in a single building. The need and opportunity for a consolidated Police, Fire and Emergency Services building was recommended to the Town in the 1995 “*Long Range Facility Needs Committee*” report, and recommended again to the 2000 Town Meeting by the Public Safety Committee.

#### **Police Department**

##### ***Issues***

- Shift and function deployment of personnel
- Combining clerical and dispatch responsibilities

- Equipment and facilities are not adequate to secure files and evidence.
- Police locker rooms do not properly segregate with equally suitable facilities for female and male officers.

### ***Recommendations***

- Undertake the planning process with the goal to construct a new Public Safety Building as part of the proposed municipal building.
- Take immediate steps to resolve, on an interim basis, the issues identified above.

### **Fire Department**

The nature of fire protection services continues to evolve. Community needs and expectations for the most effective responses to preserving life and property have caused the Town to review its methods of delivering these services.

### ***Issues***

- A *Facility Study Committee* has been formed to consider facility needs of both the community and the department. A driving force for new facilities appears to be that manufacturers of fire fighting apparatus continue to build larger (wider, longer, and heavier) pieces of equipment. As a result, Grafton's three stations are currently too small to house many newer fire apparatus models.
- Satellite facilities are too small to accommodate new fire vehicles and equipment.
- The need to construct new facilities has itself created an issue. Currently, the Fire Department appears to be considering options of separate facilities as well as a combined facility.

### ***Recommendations***

- Develop a combined Fire and Police Public Safety Center. This was also recommended as *Priority #4* in the *Long Range Facilities Committee's Report of 1995*
- Evaluate all Fire Stations to see if they can be modified in order to serve modern fire engines and related equipment.

- Undertake a professional, focused review of all Fire-related services to determine if the Town's interests would be effectively served by employing professional full-time fire staff supporting the current volunteer efforts of the department.

## **II. Schools**

### *Issues*

- A *Facility Study Committee* was formed to consider the facility needs of the community and the school system. The committee completed its work and recommended that a new Middle School be built. On January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2000, Town Meeting appropriated funding for construction of a new elementary school.
- Varying assessments of the condition and maintenance of school buildings have prompted the School Committee to address some of the problems identified. Generally, the High School is reported in poor condition; the Middle School has been renovated, including a newly constructed roof, gym, and classrooms; the Intermediate School was renovated in 1991; The South Grafton Elementary School has had a plumbing system problem; and the North Grafton Elementary School needs roof and window replacement work.
- Providing adequate classroom space for growing enrollment within the school system is the most costly facility the Town may face in the near future.

### *Recommendations*

- An Operation and Maintenance Program should be instituted to support capital reinvestment in existing facilities. Improved maintenance and effective use of existing facilities may prolong the use and quality of the School Department's assets.
- A new round of planning and analysis of facility use options should be undertaken. Using the 2000 U.S. Census and existing enrollment data and the Grafton build-out analysis that has been developed, a new plan may incorporate the impact of fully using the Intermediate School site.

### **III. Public Works Department**

The town has given attention to Public Works needs and initiated a number of studies to assist in upgrading services, such as the *Highway Infrastructure Management Program* that was developed and put into action by the Town Engineer. Their report was updated in 1999, and became the basis for a Town-wide repaving program currently underway.

#### ***Issues***

- General maintenance activities of buildings, grounds, and roadways are insufficient.
- More roadways will require maintenance as additional subdivisions are developed and the lots they contain are developed and sold.
- North Main Street needs improvement.
- A vehicle garage large enough and equipped enough to house and maintain equipment and services is needed at the Highway Shed.
- Landfill capping of the Milford Road site is necessary, as well as an on going monitoring of the site. The closed private landfill at Adams Road needs to be capped and monitored also.

#### ***Recommendations***

- Continue to invest in the Town-wide repaving program.
- Renovate and expand the Highway Shed on Upton Road.
- Cap the landfills and develop a monitoring program.

### **IV. Cemetery**

#### ***Issues***

- The three cemeteries used for burials – Pine Grove, Fairview, and Riverside – have additional acreage available for development and sale of lots.
- Surveys and development plans need to be completed, and estimates of development costs presented to the Town for funding. As needed, the Cemetery Department may request

funds to complete sections of the cemeteries, to make lots available for sale.

- The sale of lots, and the desire of the public for burial in specific locations, may change over time. Citizens of Grafton represent only a part of burial demand. People from outside the Town may desire burials in Grafton cemeteries should supply, location, or cost as the costs of lots change among area communities.

### ***Recommendation***

- The Town should revisit the issue of the cost of lots offered for sale, and the options utilizing proceeds from the lot sales. Currently, all proceeds from lot sales are deposited in the Town's Perpetual Care Fund. Some towns use "Lots and Graves Accounts" to set aside income from lot sales, to provide funds for capital improvements and future land purchases. Adopting this system would enable the services of the Cemetery to become more self-supporting.

## **V. Water**

To serve the Town, Grafton has two water districts, the Grafton Water District (GWD) and the South Grafton Water District (SGWD). They operate independently of each other.

### **Grafton Water District — *Issues***

- The Follette Street well has been closed for five years because of a chemical pollutant similar to the chemicals found in cleaning solvents. The Grafton Water District and the Town may be able to correct the problem by using a water-stripping tower to remove the chemical.
- There is an issue of minerals negatively impacting water quality in the Grafton Water District. District personnel reported two wells in the East Street area have high levels of manganese and iron in the well water.
- Connecting the GWD and SGWD systems is an issue.
- Providing water service to unsewered areas is also an issue.



***Recommendations:***

- Continue the efforts of the Town, with the Grafton Water District, to bring the Follette Street well back into service. Once the Follette Street well is in service, the demand on the East Street well will be reduced, thus lowering the amount of manganese and iron delivered to the taps.
- Support the Grafton Water District efforts to investigate other potential water supply sources.
- Expand well-protection zoning.
- Inter-connect the Grafton Water District with other water systems for emergency supplies
- Service unsewered areas.

**South Grafton Water District —*Issues:***

- The well on Providence Road is a relatively shallow well that is rarely pumped during late summer.
- The dam at the mill on Depot Street has been open since 1982, and is now in disrepair. This has caused the water table to drop about two feet.

***Recommendations:***

- Expand well protection zoning regulations.
- Study the ecological and economic impacts of repairing Grafton's historic milldams.

**VI. Sewer/Waste Water Facilities**

***Issues***

- The State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) may exert its authority to modify practices of the Sewer Department by limiting the ability of the Town to extend interceptor sewers to all sections of the community.
- The possibility of extending interceptor sewer line extensions annually has been petitioned by the Sewer Commissioners and approved by Town Meeting.
- Expansion of processing volume in the existing plant is planned in the mid-range future. The nature of the expansion

may include construction of additional tanks (volume) necessary for the secondary treatment processing of effluent.

### ***Recommendations***

- Monitor the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) policy changes during the next few years, before considering updating the *Sewer Comprehensive Plan*, in order to comply with any new DEP standards.
- Service unsewered areas with public water to reduce use of wells subject to contamination.

## **VII. Libraries**

### ***Issues***

- The Town has three small libraries, which provide ease of access, especially for children, but which are expensive to operate, supply, secure and maintain.
- The safety and security of employees, the collections, and the buildings are at risk using the current practice of opening and operating these facilities with only one employee on site.
- Specific buildings and sites need repair.
- Maintenance of the three buildings has not been effectively addressed.
- Construction of an elevator at the Grafton Center library is needed to meet ADA requirements.
- Two of the sites (Grafton Center and South Grafton) lack adequate on-site parking.
- The need for a consolidated facility was identified in the *Long Range Facilities Planning Committee Report* issued in September 1995. Residents attending planning meetings, however, have strongly supported maintaining the branch libraries, which meet the needs of families with children.

### ***Recommendations***

- The Board of Library Trustees, and the Nelson Libraries Trustees, acting with the Board of Selectmen and others, should move quickly to address several safety and security issues. To protect the assets of the library system, further

actions should be undertaken in the near future to meet the requirements of law, including handicapped access.

- Address safety at each of the three sites; such as repairing the roof and the building exterior, and addressing the needed parking areas.
- Address security at each of the three sites; establish and institute a staffing policy that requires more than one person to open and operate any one of the three libraries.
- Address the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues at each site, as required by law.
- Establish a building maintenance plan, an appropriate level of upkeep, a fund to support operations at each site, and create an ability to respond to repair and service needs effectively.
- Eventually move the Grafton Center Library to the proposed Municipal Center, and find a new revenue producing use for the existing building.
- Address need, cost and budget issues relating to the three library facilities.

## **VIII. Senior Center**

### ***Issues***

- A *Facility Study Committee* has been formed to consider facility needs of the elderly and the community.
- Space is limited. Major needs include a 'lounge' and 'health room', and adequate storage areas.
- Building maintenance is a problem.
- Staffing is lower than is needed.

### ***Recommendations***

- A Seniors bus, available through the Worcester Regional Transportation Authority (WRTA.), should be added to the existing van.
- The Trustees, the Council on Aging, and the Town Administrator should again consider the allocation and utilization of space made available by the American Legion, the VFW and others.

## **IX. Recreation**

### *Issues*

See *Open Space, Recreation, and Natural, Cultural and Historical Resources* Element

See *Open Space and Recreation Plan* 1999 draft update

### *Recommendations (Recreation)*

Special attention should be given to

- Creating additional sports fields.
- Upgrading existing playground equipment.
- Providing trails and bikeways to connect existing open spaces, recreation areas and schools.
- Encouraging private facilities to support canoeing and bicycling.
- Providing playground equipment for handicapped children.
- Improving and expanding the beach facility, the buildings, and the parking at Silver Lake.

## **X. Conservation**

### *Issues*

- Also see *Open Space and Recreation Plan*
- Ownership of some parcels claimed by the Town as “Town owned land” appears to be in question. Ownership issues should be resolved and the public invited to use these sites.
- Management responsibility of “Open Space Land” is not clear, and is fractured among several Town Boards and Commissions.
- Lake Ripple testing is underway to determine if hazards exist in the lakebed.
- Town-owned lands are not clearly marked and bounded.
- The Commission and some members of the community wish to have more open space preserved for the public’s enjoyment.
- Advertise Open Space and Recreation land, along with the intended uses for each space.
- Identify Open Space and Recreation land on a Town map, and make this map available to citizens.
- Identify (and advertise) stewardships for Open Space lands.

***Recommendations (Conservation)***

- The Town should provide minor amenities at Open Space sites to facilitate access.
- A program of Open Space land acquisition should be established and supported by Town Meeting and elected officials.
- Marsh and water areas near the Fisherville Dam should be restored to the pre-1982 condition. Members of the Commission and the public wish to achieve this in cooperation with a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project for habitat restoration.

**Accomplished 2000**

Protection of the Miscoe Brook and Warren Brook Watershed is sought with applications for State designation as an “Area of Critical Environmental Concern” (ACEC.)

**Table 6-1** lists primary *Public Services and Recommendation Options*.

**Table 6-2** suggests a *Phase Timeline for accomplishing Recommendation Options*.

**Conclusion**

Adoption of the recommendations contained in this Public Facilities and Services Element will assure that there are adequate facilities for existing and projected population. They will provide necessary services for the proposed *Land Use* plan. They will help achieve the Town’s *Goals*, especially those related to maintaining the Grafton’s Quality Of Life and the Town’s Character.

## Public Facilities and Services Recommendation Options

**Table 6-1**

<b>Town Buildings</b>	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3*</b>
<b>Town Offices</b>	Present Configuration	Lease or Purchase an existing building and convert into Town Offices	Build new Municipal Center (starting with occupancy by Town Offices and then adding other services)
<b>Public Safety</b>	Expand Police and Fire Stations	Combine Police, Fire, Emergency, and Dispatch at present site	Locate a new Public Safety Building at the new Municipal Center Site in Town Center
<b>School</b>	Present Configuration, plus new school under construction	School reoccupies space currently in use by Town Offices	<i>Option 2</i> , plus the new school under construction
<b>Library</b>	Improve present libraries	Add to Central Library; use existing branches as community centers	Build a new Central Library at the proposed Municipal Center, and re-use the existing Central Library as rental offices

*\*Option 3* provides for space needs, improves services, and best satisfies Town Goals.

## **Timeline for Public Facilities and Services Projects**

**Table 6-2**

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Responsible Agency</b>
<b>Phase One</b>	<p>Begin plans for/construction of new school facility*</p> <p>Research land acquisition for new Municipal Center Building</p> <p>Review 2000 <i>Public Safety Needs Study</i> and develop interim Public Safety solutions (i.e. accommodation of larger fire equipment*)</p>	<p>School Committee</p> <p>Board of Selectmen, Planning Board</p> <p>Board of Selectmen, Police and Fire Chiefs</p>
<b>Phase Two</b>	<p>Complete new school facility</p> <p>Enact administrative recommendations for operation and maintenance of public properties</p> <p>Prepare comprehensive plan for Municipal Center Area*</p>	<p>School Committee</p> <p>Board of Selectmen</p> <p>Board of Selectmen, Planning Board</p>
<b>Phase Three</b>	<p>Re-use the Junior High, for school uses only</p> <p>Re-locate Town Offices to Municipal Center Building</p> <p>Centralize and update Public Safety Services (as deemed necessary)*</p>	<p>School Committee</p> <p>Board of Selectmen</p> <p>Police and Fire Chiefs, Town Meeting</p>

\*Town Meeting action required where appropriation is necessary.

## TRAFFIC & CIRCULATION

# 7

### Introduction

*Traffic and Circulation* are essential to residential, commercial and industrial sectors of all cities and towns. It is commonly thought of in terms of automobiles, but it also includes pedestrian movement, bicycles, buses, vans and rail, and the connections between or among these varying methods of transportation. The Survey of Grafton residents, undertaken in early 1999, indicated that residents consider Traffic the third greatest problem in Town, superseded only by Growth and Schools. At the same time respondents indicated concern with traffic, they also voiced a liking for their scenic streets, and they found street maintenance to be good.

Traffic will increase. Since the last *Comprehensive Plan* was prepared in 1963, over twenty-four hundred (2453) additional dwellings have been built, resulting in an increase of 28,000 residential trips per day. This figure is based on the present rate of 11.7 trips per day per dwelling (figure provided by the Grafton Planning Board). This increase is further augmented by non-residential growth and its resulting traffic, increased ‘through’ traffic, and traffic generated by the recently opened Stop & Shop and commuter rail station.

Based on the 1999 Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) buildout projection, there will be over 110,000 trips per day (“tpd”) at buildout:

*5132 additional dwelling units projected at 11.7 trips per day = 60,004 more residential trips per day*

*5,116,640 square feet of industrial and commercial floor area at ten trips per day thousand square feet = 51,166 trips per day*

To this estimate must be added the following:

*Possible net increases in trips per day per dwelling, by people working at home. These trips per day are not necessarily at peak hours, but they are greater than for persons who work at employment sites other than their residences.*

*Rail station-induced traffic: 500 trips per day (plus or minus) based on the Environmental Impact Report and calculated by projected daily ridership, times two.*



To accommodate new development, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), anticipates that in Grafton at buildout there will be ninety-eight miles of newly created streets, of which 88.6 will be residential. With the addition of an average fifty-foot right of way, this means that 536 acres (88% of a square mile) will be consumed by these streets. It is not unreasonable to project that a square mile of land will be devoted to new or improved streets by buildout, given this development as well as the anticipated widening of some existing streets. This would equal 4.5 percent of the total area of the Town devoted directly to new roadways.

In view of present traffic and projected increase, it is essential that the Town evaluates and selects appropriate measures to relieve the impact of growth on traffic yet still grow incrementally. Relief measures range from intersection improvements to developing standards for reducing environmental impact by limiting increased impervious surfaces and potential run-off. Other actions, such as adopting standards for rural sidewalks<sup>1</sup>, will also moderate the impact of traffic growth.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

The Town's *Vision Statement* does not mention streets; however, the *Mission Statement*, which augments the Vision Statement, does address the issue of traffic as a need to be attended to in order to preserve the most comfortable community atmosphere. Managing traffic-flow so that the comfortable atmosphere of Town is retained is therefore a major focus of this *Traffic & Circulation Element*. Additional concerns relating to this issue and articulated in *Goals and Policies* have also been voiced at community meetings.

### *Goals*

The *Goal* from the Visioning Session is to “*manage traffic to preserve the comfortable atmosphere of the Town.*”

Other *Goals* that support the stated Goal include increasing safety on the streets, reducing generation of vehicle traffic, improving truck access to industrial, research and development sites, and improving circulation flow to other towns and cities in the region. See ***Regional Map*** in the *Preface* to the *Grafton Comprehensive Plan*.

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<sup>1</sup> Rural sidewalks, as opposed to urban and suburban sidewalks, may have more grade or may not always be parallel to the street.

### ***Policies***

*Encourage alternate means of transportation*  
*Reduce growth*  
*Limit the miles and pavement width of new streets*  
*Minimize traffic congestion*  
*Encourage the maintenance of rural appearance for residential roads and streets*  
*Maintain emergency access*

### **Existing Conditions**

The existing local and through traffic, exacerbated by the new railroad station in North Grafton, and industrial, residential and institutional development on Route 30 indicate a need for an updated traffic study.

Although the eastern portion of Town appears to be an area of growth, water supply issues, conservation land and zoning adjustments will likely control or reduce the amount of traffic growth over the long term. Such adjustments may also enable the scenic attributes of streets to be maintained.

The *Community Survey* indicated the following problem areas:

- Quinsigamond Corner (the triangle formed by Route 140, Route 122 and Bridge Street)
- Congestion on Route 122
- Congestion on Route 140

A few residents mentioned other roads and intersections, and recent serious accidents have indicated other danger areas, such as Pleasant Street.

To address the problem most frequently mentioned, Quinsigamond Corner, the Massachusetts Highway Department is making improvements by reconfiguring the intersection and installing traffic signals.

The eastern portion of Town is an area of rapid growth with increasing traffic. Water supply issues, conservation land and zoning adjustments will likely control or reduce the amount of traffic growth over the long term, and may enable the scenic attributes of the streets to be maintained.

The Route 30 corridor, essentially the Town's major growth corridor, is a critical area. It has the industrial park, Tufts, and the rail station located within it. It is projected that traffic in this area will continue to increase because of area and neighboring community development.

## Methods for reducing increased traffic and its impacts

There are many techniques that the Town can consider to achieve its circulation objectives. **Table 7-1** lists those that are appropriate for Grafton, and evaluates them for goal satisfaction.

### Traffic Recommendations and their Compatibilities with Goals

**Table 7-1 (part 1)**

Traffic & Circulation Recommendations	Goals	
	Manage Traffic	Preserve Atmosphere of Town
Sidewalks and Bikeways:		•
Adopt rural sidewalk standards	•	•
Adopt bikeway standards	•	•
Provide incentives for developers to construct rural sidewalks and bikeways of reduced dimensional requirements	•	•
Create bike lanes	•	•
Prioritize sidewalk connections between residential areas and activity centers	•	•
Develop road connection into Shrewsbury for rail station use	•	
Establish local shuttle service between train station and residential areas and major employment centers in Town and in the Worcester Regional Transit Authority District (investigate Federal funds for this program)	•	
Encourage work from home (travel trips are not at peak hours)	•	
Adopt zoning area requirements based on trips generated per day per acre	•	
Reduce allowable density	•	

Table 7-1 (part 2)

Traffic & Circulation Recommendations cont.	Goals	
	Manage Traffic	Preserve Atmosphere of Town
Establish design standards		•
Increase setbacks on numbered highways so takings will be reduced if roads are widened		•
Reduce curb cuts by separating and sharing entrances and exits in non-residential areas	•	
Increase setbacks in low density areas to maintain rural appearance of roads		•
Limit strip development to the areas where it exists now	•	•
Construct turning lanes	•	
Perform selected street widening	•	
Design and construct intersection improvements	•	
Adopt additional, more enforceable sign regulations	•	•
Paint (repaint) crosswalks	•	
Add a “rural street” category to subdivision regulations		•
Problem areas: Route 140, Route 122, and Bridge Street are being improved by the State	•	
Work with neighboring communities, especially Millbury, Westborough and Shrewsbury, towards resolution of through-traffic problems	•	
Include traffic growth figures when calculating percent of allowable non-conformance increase	•	
Encourage regional rail ticket subsidy or incentive program	•	

**Table 7-1 (part 3)**

<b>Traffic &amp; Circulation Recommendations, cont.</b>	<b>Goals</b>	
	<b>Manage Traffic</b>	<b>Preserve Atmosphere of Town</b>
Require traffic study for non-residential development	•	
Implement scenic roads and street tree programs		•
Increase bikeway and pedestrian paths to serve transportation functions, especially for children and teens	•	•
Increase elderly /handicapped transit	•	•
Reduce street pavement areas to help manage neighborhood traffic to increase safety within neighborhoods	•	•
Increase sidewalk setbacks from road pavement, to increase safety and to accommodate landscape within neighborhoods	•	•
Adopt speed control measures	•	
Configure streets to keep through traffic off residential street	•	•
Improve directional signs, especially to new economic areas and areas of interest to tourists	•	•
Increase “traffic calming” measures, such as turning lanes, lane markings	•	

## TIMELINE FOR TRAFFIC & CIRCULATION

**Table 7-2 (part 1)**

	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Responsible Agency</b>
<b>Phase I</b>		
	Adopt rural sidewalk standards Adopt bikeway standards Provide incentives for developers to construct rural sidewalks and bikeways Add a “rural street” category to subdivision regulations	Planning Board Selectmen Highway Department
	Create bike lanes Prioritize sidewalk connections between residential areas and activity centers, including the new school and other municipal facilities	Selectmen
	Paint (repaint) crosswalks on regularly scheduled basis Improve directional signs, especially to new economic areas and to areas of interest for tourists	Selectmen
	Improve problem areas: Route140, Route122, and Bridge Street	Massachusetts Highway Department
	Cooperate with neighboring communities, especially Millbury, Westborough and Shrewsbury, to manage traffic	Selectmen
	Develop Shrewsbury road connection for train station use	Selectmen
	Establish local shuttle service between train station and residential areas and major employment centers; Improve access to Tufts and CenTech Park (investigate Federal funds for this program)	Selectmen
	Encourage work-at-home (travel trips are not at peak hours);	Planning Board Town Meeting
	Adopt zoning based on trips generated per day per acre	
	Increase bikeway and pedestrian paths so that they connect open space and also serve a transportation function, especially for children and teens	Selectmen

**Table 7-2 (part 2)**

	<b>Timeline for Traffic &amp; Circulation, continued Tasks</b>	<b>Responsible Agency</b>
<b>Phase II</b>		
	Reduce allowable density Increase setbacks on numbered highways so takings will be reduced if roads are widened Increase setbacks in low density areas to maintain rural appearance of roads and decrease setbacks in the Villages to maintain Village character Limit curb cuts, especially in non-residential areas Provide for separate and shared entrances and exits in nonresidential areas	Planning Board Town Meeting
	Adopt zoning based on trips per day per acre	
	Increase elderly/handicapped transit and transportation for children to recreation areas, Town facilities, and shopping	Selectmen
	Manage neighborhood traffic to increase safety within the neighborhood, by Reducing pavement area except where bikeways are to be provided Increasing sidewalk setback from road pavement for safety and to accommodate landscape; Adopting speed control measures	Planning Board Selectmen
	Consider pedestrian and vehicular access in new Town Municipal Center design	Selectmen
<b>Phase III</b>		
	Configure streets to keep through traffic off residential streets	Planning Board Selectmen
	Perform selected street widening	State/Town
	Design and construct intersection improvements including turning lanes at major intersections	State/Town
	Adopt additional, more enforceable sign regulations in a sign by-law	Planning Board, Town Meeting
	Improve directional signs, especially to new economic areas and areas of interest to tourists	

## Conclusion

The severity of the traffic problem and the prospect of as many as ten thousand more vehicles on the road at peak hours dictates that the Town use all available techniques to reduce potential traffic and to maintain the character of the Town. Many of the recommendations are non-cost items, affected through zoning amendments. For example, revisions to home occupation regulations, which are discussed in the *Housing Element*, will reduce the projected number of peak hour trips. Design standards, for the most part, are private sector costs, as are Van programs. In the case of Van programs, federal funds may be available.

Recommendations should be used in concert for the maximum results.

See also the *Land Use* Element for discussion of land use changes that will reduce traffic, particularly improvements to highway businesses, reductions in density, and possibly the mixed-use in the station area. Mixed-use could be accommodated by transfer of development rights.





## IMPLEMENTATION

# 8

Grafton's current system of land-use regulation permits, but does not encourage, three types of new development that will move Grafton toward its *Vision*. This is not uncommon in New England, where there is a long tradition of minimizing the government's involvement in use and re-use of private property. In some cases, especially when the presence or absence of sewers impacts zoning regulations, current the regulations of Grafton appear to be at odds with the Town's *Vision*. In these regulation cases, changes can be more easily made.

Under current zoning, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning commission (CMRPC) has determined that Grafton land, defined by its municipal uses, open spaces, limitations of building technology, extent of sewer system, and environmental regulations, is about halfway built-out. That means that if none of these conditions of land definition change (and they all *will* change), eventually Grafton may double its number of families and housing units. This will result in increases in school children, water uses, sewer and water demand, garbage produced, etc., etc. It will also result in an increase in taxes paid, although typically not enough taxes are generated to cover increased costs of education and other services for new residents.

There is substantial room for growth in businesses, resulting in new employment, taxes, support of other local businesses, and traffic.

Though outside the scope and budget of this study, the Town should also examine its tax and betterment fees regulations. Such fees can have the effect of forcing land into development, even against the desires of the landowners.

Grafton's zoning code recognized early the importance of home-based businesses in context with the Internet age evolution, and this is an important step toward maintaining diversity. It demonstrates the Town's ability to provide a variety of local economic opportunities to residents just as it has done since its incorporation.

However, as Grafton continues to grow, the Town will have to decide whether or not it is willing to develop more intrusive land-use controls to protect the *Vision* of itself as a rural town, minimizing in this way both the appearance and reality of it being a suburban community.

Grafton has taken powerful steps along this path. Zoning for and the creation of CenTech Research Park, Tufts Veterinary School, and Biotech Research Park will allow the Town to remain a complete community with a variety of activities, and prevent it from becoming a bedroom town where adults are gone all day and only return to sleep.

To guide Grafton as it decides on its future, this *Comprehensive Plan* proposes a series of changes for the Town's land-use control regulations. The Town, through its review of this *Comprehensive Plan* and through its legislative process, may design its own option. For ease of analysis and discussion, the changes proposed in the *Comprehensive Plan* are grouped into three options, ranging from major to minor adjustment.

## Grafton Implementation Summary

Table 8-1

RECOMMENDATIONS <sup>1</sup>	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>LAND USE Zoning Amendments</b>					
Establish % buildable land In minimum Lot Requirement	Planning Board <sup>2</sup> Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Reduce allowable density	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget		●	
Adopt design guidelines	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget			●
Evaluate by-laws, regulations, tax policies for stronger provisions to preserve/conserv open spaces, historic features, to protect significant farmlands	Planning Board Conservation Commission	Operating Budget	●		
Include traffic growth figures when calculating percent of allowable non-conformance land use increase	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Create a station district	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Acquire Land/Establish a Municipal Center	Board of Selectmen Town Meeting	Bond or Grant	●		
Consider phased growth	Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget		●	
Revise setbacks and frontage	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Develop commercial district overlay	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		●
Revise home occupation requirements	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Establish mandatory cluster housing	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Pursue enactment of a mill village mix use amendment to the zoning by-law	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●	●	
Adjust lot size in eastern Grafton	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget		●	

<sup>1</sup> Recommended item may appear in more than one category, i.e. *Land Use* and *Housing*

<sup>2</sup> Planning Board may seek a grant for consultant services to augment its operating budget for items listed throughout this *implementation* Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>LAND USE Zoning Amendments</b> continued					
Consider transfer of development rights	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Establish watershed protection district	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget		●	
Evaluate preservation and evaluate tax status of all open space parcels.	Assessors Office	Operating Budget		●	
Revise agricultural zoning	Planning Board, Town Meeting	Operating Budget		●	
Limit sewer extensions in agriculture district	Sewer Districts	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Connect open spaces	Conservation Commission	Grant		●	●
Adopt provisions to protect hilltops and views	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Revise and update the regulations of the Grafton Wetland Protection by-law	Conservation Commission Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Expand well protection zoning regulations	Planning Board Conservation Commission Town Meeting	Operating Budget		●	
Create aquifer protection overlay zone to protect groundwater, in addition to the Water Supply Protection overlay	Planning Board Conservation Commission	Warrant Article		●	
Implement <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Plan</i>	Conservation Commission	Grants/ Gifts	●	●	●
<b>LAND USE: SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS</b>					
Revise zoning bylaws	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Establish neighborhood guidelines	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	●
Adopt zoning based on trips per day per acre	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Add a "rural street" category to subdivision regulations	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		
Provide incentives for developers to construct rural sidewalks and bikeways	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>LAND USE: SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS continued</b>					
Amend subdivision regulations so that they require retention of open space for wildlife corridors on all parcels located between or adjacent to open space (currently optional through "Flexible zoning")	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Develop local Agricultural Preservation Deed Restriction program via waiver of subdivision regs on portion of acreage in exchange for permanent restriction on remainder (see Zoning bylaw: "Flexible Zoning")	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Create limited development on the newly-acquired Hennesy Land	Planning Board, Land Trust, Conservation Commission	Operating Budget		●	
<b>LAND USE SIGNAGE</b>					
Revise sign bylaws. Adopt additional and more enforceable sign regulations	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Improve directional signs, especially to new economic areas and areas of interest to tourists	Highway Department	Operating Budget	●		
Paint (repaint) crosswalks	Highway Dept	Operating Budget	●	●	●
<b>HOUSING</b>					
Comply with Executive Order #418	Planning Board Housing Authority	Operating Budget	●		
Control rate of growth by limiting yearly number of building permits issued	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget		●	
Reduce amount of raw land available for development by changing zoning and subdivision regulations	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Increase affordable housing by using set-asides	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget		●	
Lobby for legislation to broaden definition of affordable housing (include unsubsidized units)	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Continue to encourage flexible development	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Establish a revolving fund for housing	Planning Board Town Meeting	Grant			●

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>HOUSING</b> continued					
Amend zoning to reflect additional housing options, such as age-restricted, assisted living, and adult foster care	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Allow Townhouses in Villages	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Permit multi-family housing with single-family appearance	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Revise accessory apartment zoning	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget		●	
Require traffic study for non-residential development	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		
Include traffic growth figures when calculating percent of allowable increase of non-conformance land use	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		
Encourage work from home (travel trips are not at peak hours)	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Adopt zoning based on trips per day per acre	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget		●	
Reduce pavement areas within neighborhoods to better manage neighborhood traffic and increase local safety	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Add a "rural street" category to subdivision regulations	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		
Increase sidewalk setbacks from road pavement to better manage neighborhood traffic, increase safety, and accommodate landscape	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Amend subdivision regulations to require retention of open space for wildlife corridors on all parcels located between or adjacent to open space (currently optional through "Flexible zoning")	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
<b>ECONOMICS</b>					
Establish a Committee to oversee implementation of the <i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		
Provide a high quality, high-speed town-wide communications infrastructure	Board of Selectmen	Grant	●		

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b><i>ECONOMICS continued</i></b>					
Continue to assign specific representatives to work with regional and statewide economic development efforts	Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●		
Learn about / apply for state/ federal programs for economic development	Town Administrator	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Develop specific targets for economic development ie.high-tech / bio-medical, regional tourism. Support services marketed towards CenTech, Tufts, and their spin-offs	Economic Development Commission	Operating Budget, Grant		●	
Develop a 'Site Finder' resource (See more detailed <i>Recommendation</i> in <i>Economics</i> Element)	Economic Development Commission	Grant		●	
Provide support services structure for small businesses and teleworkers	Economic Development Commission	Grant	●	●	●
Determine if existing businesses may need training programs / other help in hiring and training employees	Economic Development Commission	Grant	●	●	●
Encourage existing businesses to establish local/town-wide organizations to up-grade commercial areas (see more detailed <i>Recommendation</i> in <i>Economics</i> Element)	Planning Board Economic Development Commission	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Develop marketing program with local businesses to promote the Town in sales literature and at conferences.	Economic Development Commission	Grant	●	●	●
Plan for decline in existing businesses in response to ongoing economic changes	Economic Development Commission	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Evaluate assisted-living and continuing-care residential projects as sources of jobs/taxes	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		
<b><i>OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, AND NATURAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES</i></b>					
Maintain Massachusetts Historical Commission designation as a " Certified Local Government"	Historical Commission; Common Historic District; Selectmen	Operating Budget	●		
Pursue a historic designation of "New England Village" for the Town	Historical Commission; Common Historic District; Selectmen	Operating Budget	●		



RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, AND NATURAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES, continued</b>					
Pursue historic designation for Farnumsville and Fishersville villages	Historical Commission; Common Historic District; Selectmen	Operating Budget	●		
Evaluate preservation status of all parcels and evaluate tax status of all parcels.	Assessors Office	Operating Budget		●	
Pursue enactment of a mill village mix use amendment to the zoning by-law	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●	●	
Place permanent conservation restrictions (CR's) on those town properties that are not protected.	Conservation Commission Town Meeting	Operating Budget		●	
Secure permanent conservation restrictions on all properties w/ 30-year protection.	Conservation Commission	Operating Budget		●	
Evaluate existing tax title properties. Where appropriate, seek to place under the jurisdiction of Conservation Commission.	Conservation Commission Assessors Office	Operating Budget		●	
Evaluate by-laws, regulations, tax policies for stronger provisions to preserve/conserv open spaces/historic features/protect significant farmlands.	Planning Board Conservation Commission	Operating Budget	●		
Expand the <i>Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land</i> to include hilltop conservation, view lines and unique natural areas.	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Amend subdivision regs to require retention of open space for wildlife corridors on all parcels located between/adjacent to open space (currently optional through "Flexible zoning")	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Encourage protection of large parcels of undeveloped land via easements, conservation restrictions, fee simple interests.	Conservation Commission Board of Health	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Establish a Land Bank with tax title lands, gifts, or other conveyances	Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget		●	
Evaluate adoption of Development Rights transfers	Planning Board & Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Create a fund for acquisition of Chapter 61 lands as they become available	Conservation Commission Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, AND NATURAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES, continued</b>					
Develop local Agricultural Preservation Deed Restriction program based on waiver of subdivision regulations on a portion of the acreage in exchange for permanent restriction on the remainder (see Zoning bylaw: "Flexible Zoning")	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Seek easements to protect "special places"	Conservation Commission, GLT	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Designate additional scenic roads	Planning Board Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Adopt regulations for rural roads and sidewalks	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		
Pursue land use regulations such as scenic upland zoning to protect landscape resources	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Develop zoning to protect hillsides and views of Blackstone and Quinsigamond Rivers	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Cooperate with development of State Police Museum	Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●		
<b>EDUCATION AND INFORMATION</b>					
Institute a "Discover Grafton Day"	Planning Board Historical Commission Conservation Commission	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Increase cooperation among Cultural Council, Recreation Commission, and other local organizations	Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Provide series of short informational articles in newspaper to explain reasons and requirements of various regulations	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Publish "Welcome to Grafton" info booklet for new residents/visitors	Board of Selectmen	Grant	●		
Publicize Grafton's "special places" in a newsletter or newspaper	Planning Board Conservation Commission	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Publicize location of parks/improvements made during the current year.	Recreation Commission	Operating Budget	●	●	●

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>EDUCATION AND INFORMATION, continued</b>					
Pursue public education strategies to increase knowledge of local historic resources	Historical Commission Historical Society Historic District Commission	Grant	●	●	●
Encourage a school curriculum and programs in the schools about Grafton's history	Historical Society School Department	Operating Budget	●	●	●
In concert with outside agencies, develop and implement a water resource education program that addresses better home practices such as use of phosphate free detergents, fertilizers, and pesticides.	Water Districts, BRWA, Massachusetts Audubon Society	Grant (?)		●	●
Concentrate educational efforts to address nonconforming uses within well recharge areas	Planning Board Selectmen, Water Districts	Operating Budget	●	●	●
<b>CONSERVATION and RECREATION: - REGIONAL</b>					
Cooperate with neighboring communities in open space planning (see following action item).	Open Space Committee Planning Board	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Apply for grant with Westborough to develop a two-town overlay district	Town Planners	Grant	●		
Participate in development of the Worcester-to Providence Bikeway	Rec. Commission, Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen	Grant		●	
Secure a greenbelt along water bodies	Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, BRWA, BRVNHCC,	Grant		●	●
Establish open space corridors	Rec. Commission Conservation Commission Trails Committee	Grant	●	●	●
Implement recommendations of the Blackstone American Heritage River Program for water quality improvements	Planning Board Conservation Commission Board of Health, Highway Dept	Grant	●	●	●

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>CONSERVATION and RECREATION: - REGIONAL, continued</b>					
Implement recommendations of the BRVNHCC's Natural Resources Inventory and Assessment	Planning Board Conservation Commission	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Develop canoe launches and portages along the Blackstone River as proposed in the town study work with the BRVNHCC and the BRWA.	BRVNHCC Planning Board Conservation Commission	Grant		●	
<b>CONSERVATION and RECREATION - LOCAL</b>					
Revise and/or update <i>Open Space and Recreation Plan</i>	Planning Board	Operating Budget/ Grant			●
Provide annual report to Town Meeting on status of <i>Plan Objectives</i>	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Resolve ownership issues of land parcels claimed by the to Town as 'Town owned' and then invite public to use them	Town Council Board of Selectmen	Warrant Article		●	●
Determine boundaries of and clearly mark all Town-owned lands	Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●		
Establish a land acquisition program	Board of Selectmen Town Meeting	Grant		●	●
Clarify and consolidate management responsibilities of Open Space lands	Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●		
Revise and update the regulations of the Grafton Wetland Protection By-law	Conservation Commission		●		
Pursue Areas of Critical Concern (ACEC) designation for the Miscoe Brook Watershed.	Conservation Commission Planning Board GLT	Accomplished July 2000			
Create an aquifer protection overlay zone to protect groundwater, in addition to the Water Supply Protection overlay	Planning Board Conservation Commission	Warrant Article		●	
Continue to work to acquire and/or protect the Great Meadows	Town Assessor, Conservation Commission	Warrant Article	●		
Evaluate closing the dam to restore Fisherville Pond	Conservation Commission	Grant	●		

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>CONSERVATION, LOCAL, continued</b>					
Restore the Fisherville Marshes to pre-1982 condition	Planning Board Conservation Commission, with US Army Corps of Engineers	Grant	●		
Implement a program to improve and maintain the water quality of Lake Ripple	Lake Ripple Task Force, Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Deed restrict Town parcels within the viewshed of the Willard House to maintain 18th century atmosphere	Historical Commission, Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Create limited development on the newly-acquired Hennesy Land	Planning Board, Land Trust, Conservation Commission	Warrant Article		●	
Provide minor amenities at Open Space sites, to facilitate access	Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission	Grant		●	
Activate a <i>Trails Committee</i> , who could develop a map of existing trails and proposed routes and destinations	Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●		
Develop a parcel priority list to identify gaps that might extend existing trails	Trails Committee	Operating Budget	●		
Work with relevant Town and regional organizations to develop a map of existing trails and proposed routes and destinations.	Trails Committee	Gift/Grant	●		
Develop an outreach program when planning the Town-wide trails to secure cooperation of affected landowners	Trails Committee	Operating Budget		●	●
Provide trails and bikeways to connect existing open spaces, recreation areas, and schools	Trails Committee, Town Meeting	Grant	●		
Develop trails for multi-purpose use at the Chestnut Street Forest	Grafton Land Trust, Trails Committee	Grant		●	
Develop trails for multi-purpose use at Gummere Woods	Grafton Land Trust, Trails Committee	Grant	●		

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>RECREATION</b>					
Establish a position of full time Recreation Director or Coordinator	Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Operating Budget		●	
Develop a 5-year Capital Improvements plan for all recreation facilities; provide creative methods for open space acquisition and management	Recreation Commission	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Publicize the location of parks and any improvements made during the current year	Recreation Commission	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Research user fees and fund raising for parks	Recreation Commission	Operating Budget	●		
Encourage youth group involvement in development & maintenance of parks	Recreation Commission	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Develop a public park on the Fisherville Mill site, including commemorative markers	Recreation Commission, Town Meeting	Grant		●	
Find a site suitable for a neighborhood park in the Fitzpatrick Road area	Recreation Commission	Operating Budget	●		
Develop a park site in the Fitzpatrick road area (see <i>Land Acquisition</i> )	Town Meeting	Grant		●	●
Continue work on the development of Dauphinais Park on Follette Street	Rec. Commission, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Grafton Water District, Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Develop plans for recreational improvements at Fisher Park	Recreation Commission	Operating Budget, Grant	●		
Increase recreational access for user groups	Recreation Commission	Operating Budget, Grant	●	●	●
Increase recreational opportunities for teenagers and handicapped persons	Recreation Commission	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Upgrade existing playground equipment	Recreation Commission	Operating Budget	●		
Create additional sports fields	Recreation Commission Town Meeting	Appropriation/Grant		●	

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>RECREATION, continued</b>					
Develop a plan to expand use of existing facilities that addresses improvement of access and installation of night lighting	Recreation Commission	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Expand the use of Lake Ripple	Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Improve and expand beach facilities, buildings, and parking at Silver Lake	Recreation Commission	Operating Budget, Grant		●	
Develop a boat launch at Hovey Pond suitable for canoes and rooftop boats	Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission	Grant		●	
Improve stocking and access at Cronin and Miscoe Brooks in conjunction with the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife	Conservation Commission	Grant/Gift		●	
Encourage private facilities to support canoeing and bicycling	Recreation Commission	Operating Budget		●	
<b>PUBLIC FACILITIES</b>					
Plan for Municipal Center and acquire land, possibly south of Grafton Center	Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Bond or Grant	●	●	
Plan a program for consolidating public services at the new Municipal Center	Board of Selectmen, Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Assign control of public buildings to depts that are primary users, or establish property management office to maintain/repair Town buildings	Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●		
<b>PUBLIC FACILITIES: PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS</b>					
Develop Fire and Police Public Safety Center	Selectmen, Police and Fire Chiefs	Grant			●
Centralize and update public safety services	Selectmen, Police and Fire Chiefs	Operating Budget			●
Review 2000 Public Safety Needs Study and develop interim public safety solutions	Selectmen, Police and Fire Chiefs, Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b><i>PUBLIC FACILITIES: PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS</i></b>					
Evaluate all Fire Stations to see if they can be modified to serve modern fire engines and equipment	Board of Selectmen, Police and Fire Chiefs	Operating Budget	●		
Undertake professional review of fire-related services to determine if Town would be best served by employing professional full-time fire staff to support current volunteer efforts	Board of Selectmen, Police and Fire Chiefs	Warrant Article	●		
<b><i>PUBLIC FACILITIES: SCHOOLS</i></b>					
Institute operation / maintenance program to support / prolong the use of existing School Department facilities	School Committee	Operating Budget	●		
Initiate new planning of school facility use options using the 2000 census, existing enrollment data, newly developed Town build-out analysis	School Committee	Operating Budget	●		
<b><i>PUBLIC FACILITIES: LIBRARIES</i></b>					
Address immediate safety/security issues at each site, and establish/institute staffing policy requiring more than one person to open and operate a site	Library Trustees, Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●		
Address the American Disabilities Act (ADA) issues at each site, as required by law	Library Trustees, Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●		
Address long range safety and security issues (See <i>Public Facilities and Services</i> Element)	Library Trustees, Board of Selectmen	Warrant Article	●	●	●
Address need, cost, and budget issues relating to the three library facilities	Library Trustees, Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●		
Address specific building and site damage problems	Library Trustees, Board of Selectmen	Warrant Article	●		
Establish building maintenance plan, appropriate upkeep, create ability to effectively respond to repair/service needs at each site	Library Trustees, Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Establish an operations fund to support each library site	Library Trustees, Board of Selectmen	Grant/Gifts		●	



RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b><i>PUBLIC FACILITIES: Libraries, continued</i></b>					
Move the Grafton Center Library to the proposed Municipal Center, and then find a revenue-producing use for the existing main library building	Board of Library Trustees, Board of Selectmen	Grant/Gifts		●	●
<b><i>PUBLIC FACILITIES: SENIOR CENTER</i></b>					
Consider allocation and use of space for Seniors made available by the American Legion, the VFW, and others for Seniors	Council on Aging, Town Administrator	Operating Budget	●		
Add a Seniors' bus to the existing van, with funding available through the Worcester Regional Transportation Authority (WRTA)	Council on Aging, Town Administrator	Operating Budget	●		
<b><i>PUBLIC FACILITIES: PUBLIC WORKS</i></b>					
Continue Town-wide repaving program	Public Works Department	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Renovate and expand the highway shed on Upton Road	Public Works Department	Operating Budget	●		
Cap the landfills and develop a landfill monitoring program	Public Works Department	Operating Budget	●	●	●
<b><i>PUBLIC FACILITIES: CEMETERY</i></b>					
Reconsider costs of sale lots and options for using sale proceeds. Consider establishing a 'Lots and Graves Account' to provide funds for capital improvement and future land purchases	Public Works Department (Cemetery Division)	Revenue	●		
<b><i>PUBLIC FACILITIES: WATER AND SEWER</i></b>					
Develop additional sites for water supply wells to keep up with foreseen growth	Grafton & South Grafton Water Districts	Revenue	●		
Continue efforts to reactivate Follette Street Well	Grafton Water District	Revenue	●		
Expand well protection zoning regulations	Planning Board, Town Meeting, Conservation Commission	Operating Budget		●	
Study ecological and economic impacts of repairing historic milldams	Conservation Commission	Operating Budget			●

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b><i>PUBLIC FACILITIES: WATER AND SEWER, continued</i></b>					
Concentrate educational efforts to address nonconforming uses within well recharge areas	Planning Board Selectmen, Water Districts	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Inter-connect Grafton Water District with other water systems for emergency supplies	Planning Board Selectmen, Water Districts	Operating Budget	●		
Monitor State DEP policy changes during next few years before considering the Sewer Comprehensive Plan update in order to comply with any new DEP standards	Planning Board, Selectmen, Water Districts	Operating Budget	●		
Service unsewered areas	Sewer Commission	Betterments			●
Extend sewer service to areas of high development activity/septic failure.	Sewer Commission	Betterments		●	●
Encourage monitoring and repair of individual septic systems of properties, through education actions	Board of Health	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Support the work of the local underground storage tank task force.	Storage Tank Task Force	Operating Budget	●		
Encourage Package Plants for non-sewered developed areas	Planning Board, Sewer Commission	Operating Budget		●	●
<b><i>TRAFFIC &amp; CIRCULATION</i></b>					
Adopt rural sidewalk standards	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		
Create bike lanes	Planning Board	Operating Budget, Grant		●	●
Adopt bikeway standards	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		
Increase bikeway / pedestrian paths to serve transportation functions, especially for children and teens	Town Meeting	Grant		●	
Prioritize sidewalk connections between residential areas and activity centers	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Provide incentives for developers to construct rural sidewalks and bikeways	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>TRAFFIC &amp; CIRCULATION</b> <i>continued</i>					
Add Seniors' bus to existing van, with funding available through the Worcester Regional Transportation Authority (WRTA)	Council on Aging, Town Administrator	Grant	●		
Increase elderly /handicapped transit	Planning Board	Grant		●	
Establish local shuttle service between train station, residential areas and major employment centers (Federal funding?)	Board of Selectmen	Grant	●		
Develop the Shrewsbury road connection for rail station use	Selectmen, Town of Shrewsbury	Appropriation, Grant		●	
Encourage regional rail ticket subsidy or incentive program	Board of Selectmen	Grant	●		
Encourage work from home (because travel trips are not at peak hours)	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		
Adopt zoning based on trips per day per acre	Planning Board, Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Implement 'scenic roads and streets' tree programs	Conservation Commission, Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Reduce allowable density	Planning Board, Town Meeting	Operating Budget		●	
Increase setbacks on numbered highways, so takings are reduced if roads are widened	Planning Board, Town Meeting	Operating Budget		●	
Increase setbacks in low density areas to maintain rural appearance of roads	Planning Board, Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Reduce curb cuts/ /share entrances and exits in non-residential areas	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		
Limit strip development to the areas where it exists now	Planning Board, Town Meeting	Operating Budget		●	
Resolve problem traffic areas of Route 140, Route 122, and Bridge Street	Public Works Dept, State	State	Being improved by the State during 2001-2		
Design and construct intersection improvements	Public Works Dept, State	State		●	●
Perform selected street widening	Public Works Dept	Warrant Article		●	●
Construct turning lanes	Public Works Dept	Warrant Article		●	



RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY	FUNDING	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
<b>TRAFFIC &amp; CIRCULATION</b> <i>continued</i>					
Adopt additional and more enforceable sign regulations	Planning Board, Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Paint (repaint) crosswalks	Public Works Dept.	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Work with neighboring communities, especially Millbury, Westborough and Shrewsbury, towards resolution of through-traffic problems	Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget	●	●	●
Include traffic growth figures when calculating percent of allowable non-conformance land use increase	Planning Board, Town Meeting	Operating Budget	●		
Require traffic study for non-residential development	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		
Add a "rural street" category to subdivision regulations	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		
Manage neighborhood traffic to increase safety within neighborhoods by reducing pavement areas	Planning Board	Operating Budget		●	
Manage neighborhood traffic by increasing sidewalk setbacks from road pavement, for safety and to accommodate landscape	Board of Selectmen	Operating Budget		●	
Manage neighborhood traffic by adopting speed control measures	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●		
Configure streets to keep through traffic off residential streets	Planning Board	Operating Budget	●	●	●
<b>OTHER</b>					
Town-wide "Fix-Up, Clean Up" Campaign for public and private properties	Citizen's Committee	Contributions	●	●	●
Capital Budget, including an investment fund for public infrastructure and facilities	Finance Committee	Operating Budget, Warrant Article, Grants	●	●	●
Apply for appropriate grants for planning, land acquisition and construction.	Town Administrator	Operating Budget	●	●	●

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Summary of 442 Responses of the 1999 Town Survey**

#### **FUTURE CONDITIONS:**

##### **What do you think are the two most serious issues facing Grafton in the next 10 years?**

Residential Growth	172
School Quality/Crowding	172
Traffic/Road Conditions	75
Services to Handle Growth/Modernization	65
Over-Development	60
Tax Base/Lack of Businesses	49
Preservation of Open Space	39
Leadership	22
Lack of Identity/Planning	10
Community Unity	9
Water	7
Lack of Recreational Opportunities (especially for youths)	6
Conflict Between New and Long-time Residents	5
Library Space	5
Small Lots	4
Building on Watershed Areas/Wetlands	4

##### **What characteristics of Grafton would you like to see maintained?**

Small Town/Rural Character	161
Open Space	90
Town Center	53
Historic Value/Charm	52
Community Pride/Volunteerism	27
Country Setting	12
Farms	12
Safety	7
Wildlife	7
Open Town Meeting	6
Quality of Education	5
Village Appeal	5
Small Town/Family Values	4
Wetlands	4
Neighborhoods	4
Scenic Country Roads	4

**What characteristics of Grafton would you like to see eliminated?**

Crowding	35
Factionalism	30
Traffic Congestion	29
Vacant and Abandoned Buildings	28
Commercial Development	20
Strip Malls	18
Poor Management	16
Free-reign for developers	16
Haphazard Building	13
Division Between Newer and Long Time Residents	11
No regard for Aesthetics	10
Unkempt Commercial Properties	10
Pettiness/Bitterness	9
Overcrowded Schools	9
Unregulated/Unplanned Growth Along 122	6
The Mills	6
The Status Quo	5
High Taxes	5
Construction of Single Family Houses	5
Lack of Commercial Growth	5
Power Structure "Nepotism"	4
Water Problems	4
Litter	4
No Local Shopping	4
Fast Food Restaurants	4

**What is your opinion about the rate of residential growth in Grafton?**

Growing too rapidly	315
Growth rate about right	112
Not growing fast enough	8
No opinion	4

**What is your opinion about the rate of commercial growth in Grafton?**

Growing too rapidly	48
Growth rate about right	152
Not growing fast enough	195
No opinion	23

## **ECONOMY:**

### **In what community do you do most of your food shopping?**

Worcester	210
Westborough	115
Shrewsbury	84
Millbury	48
Northbridge	29
Whitinsville	12
<b>Grafton</b>	5
Auburn	4

### **In what community do you do most of your other shopping?**

Worcester	122
Westborough	117
Shrewsbury	61
Auburn	58
Natick	42
Framingham	33
Marlborough	29
<b>Grafton</b>	13
Northborough	11
Boston	10
Berlin	10
Northbridge	4

### **In what City or Town do you work?** (Note: 50 different towns and cities listed)

<b>Grafton</b>	99
Worcester	51
Westborough	37
Framingham	25
Boston	24
Marlborough	14
Natick	12
Hopkinton	10
Shrewsbury	8
Auburn	8
Rhode Island	7
Southborough	6
Milford	5
Waltham	5
Bolton	4



**If you work in Grafton, do you work at home?**

Yes 46  
No 53

**What type of economic development, if any, would you like to see encouraged in Grafton and where?**

Commercial	127
Industrial	98
Research and Development/Hi Tech	49
None	32
Small Businesses/ Mom and Pop	31
Supermarket	30
Light Industry/Manufacturing	28
Recreation (movies, bowling alleys)	18
Restaurants	16
Retail	8
Farming	4
Health Club	4
Bakery	4
Bank	4

**What type of economic development, if any, would you like to see discouraged in Grafton?**

Industrial/Manufacturing	76
Environmentally Hazardous	40
Strip Malls	28
Residential Development	22
None	21
Big Box Stores	19
Adult Entertainment	18
Fast Food/Doughnut	18
Car Sales	11
Bars	8
Malls	8
Commercial	8
Casino	5
Jails	4

**Would you like changes in the commercial strip along Route 122?**

Yes 292  
No 67

**If yes, what changes?**

Beautification	51
Design Requirements/ Consistency among Structures	30
Traffic Controls	25
Traffic Lights	23
Signage Regulation	19
Widening	19
Increase Commercial Diversity	18
Access Roads	18
Fill or Remove Vacant Buildings	18
Trees/Landscaping Requirements	14
Stop Development	12
Clean Up	11
Sidewalks	8
Businesses with Character	8
Safety Turnoffs	8
Facade Improvements	7
Better Planning	5
Create Village/Neighborhood Look	5
Fewer Driveways	4

**Do you think the Town should improve business areas and encourage re-use of existing structures, e.g., The Mill areas?**

Yes 355  
No 26

**If Yes, what should the Town do?**

Give abatements	100
Zoning changes	69
Short Term Tax breaks/incentives	23
T.I.F Arrangements	10
Flexible/Mixed Zoning	6
Better Atmosphere for Businesses	9
Approach Case-by-Case	5
Streamlined Permitting/Licensing	5

## **TOWN SERVICES:**

### **Do you think the Town should regionalize purchasing Police, Fire and/or other departments and facilities with nearby communities to affect savings?**

Yes 167  
No 173

### **If Yes, what services and/or facilities should the Town consider regionalizing?**

Purchasing	35
Fire	32
Police	22
Schools	9
Road Maintenance	8
Ambulance	8
Library	6
Trash Collection/Disposal	6
Sewer	5
Municipal	5
Water	4
Equipment and Training	4

### **What additional public facilities or services should the Town provide, if any?**

None	29
Recreation Center/Facilities	26
Recycling Pick-up	20
Youth Center	19
A Larger Library	17
Sportsfields with Lights	12
Town Park	10
Public Pool	10
Sidewalks	10
Trash Disposal for All	8
Senior Center/Activities	7
Public Transportation	7
Ambulance	5
Day Care	4

**Do you think that any additional specific areas of the Town should be served by sewers?**

Yes	148
No	117

**If Yes, even if it's an expense to the Town?**

Yes	99
No	34

**OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION:**

**Does Grafton need additional recreation facilities?**

Yes	247
No	108

**If Yes, should tax dollars be spent to acquire land for these purposes?**

Yes	195
No	28

**If Yes, what type of facilities are needed?**

Swimming facilities	88
Ballfields (lighted)	67
Skating rinks	66
Bicycle paths	62
Tennis courts (lighted)	45
Walking/hiking paths (lighted)	25
Youth Center	19
A Centralized Complex/YMCA	16
Skateboard park	16
Playground	10
Golf Course	10
Basketball Courts (lighted)	9
Gym/Health Club	7
More Access to School Facilities	6

**Does Grafton need additional open space?**

Yes	264
No	94

**If Yes, should tax dollars be spent to acquire land for these purposes?**

Yes	210
No	25

**What uses would you like for Town-owned conservation land?**

Hiking	236
Picnicking	187
Canoeing	171
Hunting	65
No Hunting	86
Biking	35
Walking Paths	25
Wildlife Preserve	20
Passive Recreation	18
Cross Country Skiing	12
Fishing	9
Education	9
Bird Watching	9
Horseback Riding	7
All Uses Except Motorized	7
Camping	4
Public Park	4

**If one were developed, would you utilize a network of open spaces, e.g., trail system?**

Yes	327
No	51

\*There were 23 yes answers that were conditional upon the trail system being well light and safe

**ZONING AND OTHER LAND USE CONTROLS:**

**Should the Town consider implementing laws to regulate house size in relation to lot size?**

Yes	276
No	117

**Would you support Managed Growth, e.g., a limit on building permits issued per year?**

Yes	361
No	50

**What other Zoning and/or Land Use Control changes would you like to see adopted?**

Increased Lot Size	145
Expand Commercial/Industrial Zones	52
Increased Conservation Planning	13
Tighten Commercial/Industrial Zones	8
Stricter Enforcement	5
Increased Open Space Requirements in Cluster	5
Design Standards	4
Farming Abatements	4
None	4



## APPENDIX B

### DEFINITIONS OF THE TERM NEIGHBORHOOD

“...A local area whose residents are generally conscious of its existence as an entity and have informal face-to-face contact and some social institutions they recognize as their own.”

–*The Language of Cities*, Charles Abrams, Viking Press, New York, 1971

“ An integrated, planned, urban area related to the larger community of which it is a part and consisting of residential districts, a school or schools, shopping facilities, religious buildings, open spaces, and perhaps a degree of service industry.”

–*Encyclopedia of Urban Planning*, Arnold Whittick, Editor, McGrall-Hill, New York, 1974

“...The service area of a primary school.” –*Planning the Neighborhood*

“...The service area for the elementary school, a park or playground, shopping, all in walking distance. A basis for citizen participation.”

–*Principles and Practice of Urban Planning*, William Goodman, editor, International City Managers' Association, Washington, D.C. 1968





## APPENDIX C

The following definitions are submitted for reference and to clarify discussion. They are extracted in part from The Language of Cities by Charles Abrams, published by Viking Press.

**Accessory Apartment** – A dwelling unit that is subordinate to the principle dwelling of which it is a part.

**Adult Foster Care** – Affordable independent living provided with some cleaning, food service, and monitoring of medication.

**Affordable Housing** – Housing for those persons whose income level is below eighty percent (80%) of the regional median household income for a family consisting of up to four people. *Chapter 40B*<sup>1</sup> states that a ten percent (10%) threshold of the housing stock should be "affordable" for low or moderate-income households.

**Age-Restricted Housing** – Dwelling units, housing subdivision, or development in which each residence must be occupied by at least one person fifty-five years of age or older. Such housing may provide some maintenance services

**Apartment** – A living unit that is part of a building which itself is made up of multiple dwelling units.

**Assisted Living Residence** – A residential development, possibly with some independent residential units, with support services, as defined by *Chapter 19D* of the General Laws of Massachusetts and which conforms to the requirements of said chapter. These services include "aid or assistance with bathing, dressing/grooming, ambulation, eating, toileting or other similar tasks, for three or more residents who are not related by consanguinity or affinity to their care provider"<sup>2</sup>.

**Cluster Zoning** – (often called 'Flexible Zoning') A form of zoning that allows a developer to reduce his minimum lot size below the zoning ordinance's requirements if the land thereby gained is preserved as open space for the community.

**Congregate Housing** – A group living arrangement for persons who cannot easily maintain their own houses or apartments, financially or otherwise, but who do not need nursing home care. The persons living together may care for themselves or may have some support services.

**Dwelling Unit** – One or more rooms with cooking, living, sanitary and sleeping facilities arranged for the use of one or more persons living together as a single housekeeping unit.

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<sup>1</sup> *Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40B*, Act effective 1 November 1969

<sup>2</sup> *Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 19D*

**Flexible Zoning** – refer to alternative name, ‘**Cluster Zoning**’ listed above.

**Garden Apartment** – A general term describing low-rise, multi-family housing surrounded by landscaped open space. The building rarely exceeds three stories.

**Multi-family Dwelling** – Generally a building composed of three or more dwelling units, usually having common access, service system, and use of land. Such a building usually has at least three families or more living independently of each other and doing their own cooking.

**Over-Fifty-Five Housing** – see “Age Restricted Housing”, above.

**Planned-Unit Development** – A residential development in which the subdivision and zoning regulations apply to the project as a whole rather than to its individual lots (as in most tract housing). Densities are calculated on a project-wide basis, permitting among other things the clustering of dwellings and provision of common open space. A main requirement is that over-all densities not exceed that laid down in the guidelines. PUD facilitates a more comprehensive land-use plan along principles similar to the medieval village or New England town. Potential advantages include improved site design that is free of standard lot pattern limitations; lower street and utility costs made possible by reduced frontages; more useful open space due to reduction or elimination of the less usable and front yards required by traditional zoning; and the possibility through its greater freedom in design of increasing over-all densities without loss of essential amenities. The terms “planned unit development” and “cluster development” are often used interchangeably, although there are some distinctions. ‘Cluster housing’ is sometimes known as ‘open space residences’ or ‘flexible zoning.’

**Single-Family Dwelling** – One or more persons living together in one dwelling unit, but not including sororities, fraternities or other communal arrangements.

**Townhouse** – A single-family dwelling unit attached to another in such a manner that each dwelling has a door at ground level and front and rear access to the outside. The dwelling may be in separate ownership from the unit(s) to which it is attached. The form of ownership, e.g., rental, condominium or individual ownership, is not relevant to zoning.

## APPENDIX D

### Criteria for Selection of Distinctive and Noteworthy Landscapes Central Uplands Region

Massachusetts Landscape Inventory - Department of Environmental Management

Feature	Distinctive Class A	Noteworthy Class B	Minimal Class C
<b>Landform</b>	Noted geological features; Sharp exposed bedrock outcrops	Some identifiable features	Few if any features
<b>Landcover</b>	Mosaic of natural and agricultural/pastoral vegetation; Working farmland; Stands of old growth timber greater than 60"	Some agricultural land but majority woodland/wetland; Some timber greater than 60'	Abandoned farmland; Unbroken woodland; Scrubland; Most timber under 60'
<b>Glacial Features</b>	Drumlins	Ground moraine	Outwash
<b>Rivers and Streams</b>	Streams with large volume and changing flow characteristics such as falls, rapids, meanders etc.; No visible pollution	Unpolluted brooks with some changing flow characteristics; Rivers and streams with low density development	Rivers and streams with high density riverfront development; Visibly polluted rivers and streams
<b>Lakes and Ponds</b>	Lakes and ponds with little or no shorefront development; Good shoreline configuration; Island or outstanding shoreline vegetation	Lakes and ponds with low density development; Some shoreline irregularity	Lakes and ponds with high density shore front development
<b>Vistas</b>	Outstanding vistas of dominant features	Vistas of non-dominant features; Seasonal vistas	Vistas minimal or absent
<b>Cultural Features</b>	Historic district; Historic sites; Farmstead; Major eyesores absent; Little contemporary development	Historic buildings and farms; Some new development; Light industry; Eyesores that do not destroy integrity of the area	High density development; Subdivisions; Strip towns; Shopping centers; Heavy industry; Major eyesores that destroy visual integrity



## APPENDIX E

### Special Places in Grafton

The following list shall serve as a partial guide for considering whether or not a development proposal meets criterion “C” of Section 5.3.13 of the *Design Guidelines* of the *Flexible Development Amendment* and provides a design that does not violate, in this respect, its purpose. Criterion “C” reads as follows:

**"Leave unblocked or uninterrupted scenic views and vistas, particularly as seen from public roads, special places as designated in the Town of Grafton Open Space and Recreation Plan, or scenic roads."**

These places were elicited in response to Question 8 of the *Open Space and Recreation Survey* of 1991 and through a Nominal Group Process Technique conducted with the *Open Space and Recreation Committee* in 1991. In both cases, participants were asked to:

**"Please list, in order of preference, five sites in Grafton that you think make the town a special place in which to live. As site may be historically important, contribute to the physical beauty of the town, or simply be a spot that makes you happy you live here."**

1. Town Common
2. Silver Lake

#### **Farm Areas and Rural Roads:**

3. Tufts Veterinary School farm fields
4. Knowlton Farm
5. Merriam Road
6. Old Westboro Road
7. Adam Farm
8. Creeper Hill orchards

#### **Scenic Areas:**

9. Hills, including the intersection of Keith Hill and Old Upton Road/ Potter Hill/ Brigham Hill
10. Fay Mountain Road and George Hill area/ Soap Hill/ Lazy Hill
11. North Street/ South Street
12. Milford Road
13. Bruce Hollow vista
14. Frost land, on Brigham Hill abutting Lake Ripple

**Mill Areas**

- 15. Mill Villages**
- 16. Fisherville**
- 17. Washington Mills/ Linen tread mill**
- 18. Lake Ripple**
- 19. Willard Clock Museum area**
- 20. Blackstone River and Canal**
- 21. Fisherville Marshes**
- 22. Merriam Woods**
- 23. Great Meadow**
- 24. Lion's Club Land**
- 25. Indian and Old Indian Burial Grounds**